Our Young Aeroplane Scouts

IN TURKEY

By Horace Porter

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Merry Xmas

to James

from John

Dec - 25 - 1918

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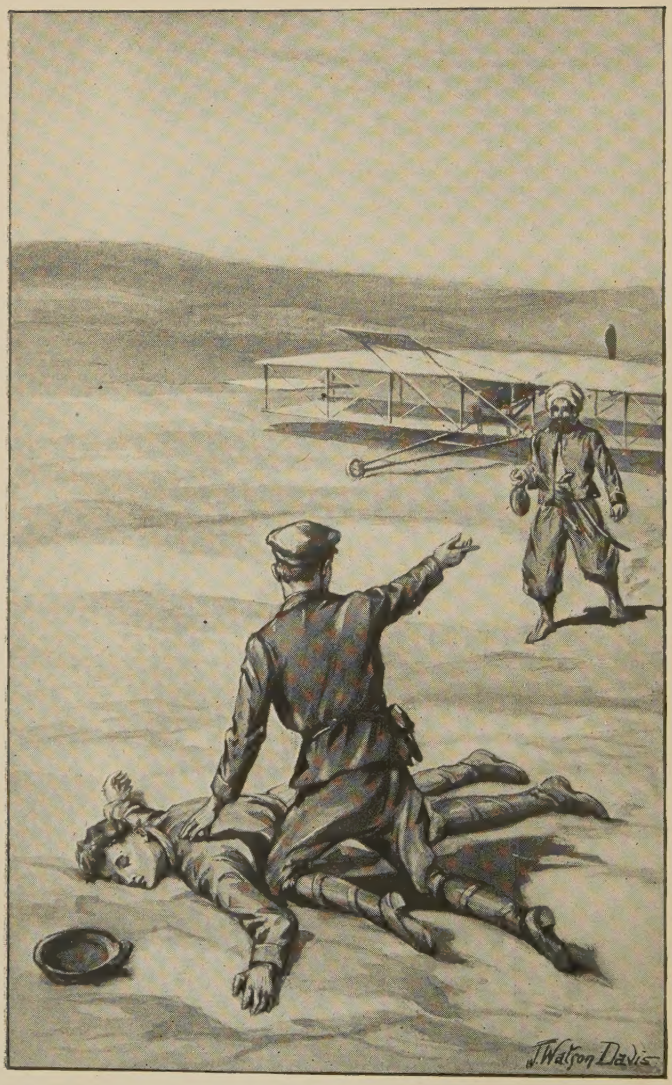


"COME TO LIFE, OLD TOP," CRIED BILLY, EXULTANTLY, "HERE COMES A MAN TO GIVE YOU A DRINK." *Page 21.*

Our Young Aeroplane Scouts in Turkey.

Our Young Aeroplane Scouts In Turkey

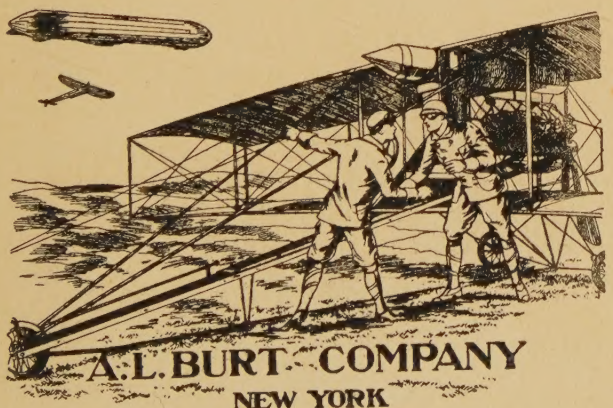
OR

Bringing the Light to Yusef

By HORACE PORTER

AUTHOR OF

"Our Young Aeroplane Scouts In France and Belgium."
"Our Young Aeroplane Scouts In Germany."
"Our Young Aeroplane Scouts In Russia."



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OUR YOUNG AEROPLANE SCOUTS IN TURKEY

OUR YOUNG AEROPLANE SCOUTS IN TURKEY.

CHAPTER I.

LOST IN THE DESERT.

THERE was a muffled explosion and the big army biplane rocked crazily two thousand feet in the air.

Billy Barry, at the wheel, with his usual skill and coolness, righted the machine with an effort. Then he listened for the sound of the engine that would tell him the craft was able to continue its journey.

No such sound came to his ears.

"What's the answer, old man?" he called to his friend and chum, Henri Trouville, who even now was seeking to ascertain the extent of the damage.

"Busted," replied Henri calmly, raising his voice to make it audible above the whirring of the propellers.

"I got that," was the response; "but what was it busted?"

"The whole shebang. The engine just naturally got tired working and blew up."

"Then we'll have to land?"

"That's what."

"Down she goes then."

Under Billy's firm hand the aeroplane had been gliding slowly toward the earth ever since the explosion. Now he sent it down even swifter.

Still a hundred feet above the ground there was a sharp crack. Something had given way, and the machine went tumbling downward, throwing both boys from their seats as it turned turtle.

Fortunately, both lads fell clear of the craft, which struck the ground almost as quickly as they did, but some feet away; and fortunately again, Billy and Henri had picked out soft spots on which to land.

Consequently they were not badly hurt, although they were considerably shaken up.

Henri was the first to pick himself up, and the humorous twinkle was gone from his eyes as he looked about. His first feeling was anger that such an accident should have befallen them, but this gave way to surprise as he glanced about him.

Billy had also risen upon his feet, and as he glanced first to the north, then east, south and west, his amazement was equal to that of his chum.

"In the name of the Great Czar, where are we?" he ejaculated.

For a moment Henri was unable to take his eyes from the broad expanse of glistening sand that stretched out on all sides as far as he could see.

Sand! Sand! There was nothing else in sight.

In spite of the time of year—it was the month of February—a boiling and blistering sun looked down upon them. Even through the soles of their heavy shoes the sand was hot to their feet. Not a tree, not a piece of green to break the monotony. Nothing but sand.

Henri took all this in before he answered Billy's ejaculation.

"Looks like we might be in the middle of the Sahara Desert," he replied, forcing himself to smile.

"This is no laughing matter," returned Billy. "I don't think much of that joke."

"Maybe it's no joke," suggested Henri.

Billy gazed at him seriously; then a look of incredulity passed over his face.

"Say!" he demanded. "You don't really believe that, do you?"

Henri shrugged his shoulders.

"Why not?" he wanted to know.

"Well, I'm here to admit that this looks like my dreams of the Sahara; but how could we have sailed so far off our course?"

"Too deep for me; but here we are!"

"It'll take more than an eye full of sand to convince me this is the Sahara," declared Billy. "It's a desert, all right—I'm willing to admit that; but it'll take somebody who's on speaking terms with the Sahara to make me believe this is it."

"I hope you are right," replied Henri, "but I

think you're wrong. However, here we are, and the question before the board is: What are we going to do?"

"Stay," said Billy briefly, "unless we get busy and fix up this junk."

He tapped one of the wings of the fallen aeroplane disdainfully with his foot.

Henri approached and surveyed it carefully.

"Fat chance!" was his only comment.

"Well, what are we going to do?" demanded Billy. "Stand here and roast?"

"You might try sitting down for a while," replied Henri, with a slight grin.

Billy grinned back at his chum.

"It doesn't take two looks to tell me our bird's wings have been clipped," he said dryly. "Shall we hoof it a while, or stay here?"

"One way is as good, or as bad, as the other," was the reply. "But my suggestion is that we stay here. What's the use of heading for some place when you don't know where some place is?"

"My idea exactly, old top," and Billy tried to appear cheerful. "Why can't we clip off those wings and rig up some kind of a tent? Old Sol is getting too well acquainted with me. I don't like to make him mad, but a piece of canvas between us won't hurt my feelings a little bit."

"That's a good idea, Billy."

Henri produced a large pocket knife and bent

over one wing of the machine. Billy followed suit on the other.

"Lucky this is a pretty sizeable bird," said Billy, as he worked.

"Right," agreed Henri.

He arose a few moments later with a piece of canvas in his hands. This he spread out on the ground, and a moment later Billy laid his piece alongside of it.

"We'll have to join 'em together some way," he said.

From the lapel of his coat Henri produced more than a dozen large pins.

"I keep these for an emergency," he explained. "My suspenders might 'bust,' you know."

They set to work rapidly, and soon had the two sheets pinned together.

"Think she'll hold?" asked Billy.

"She'll have to hold."

Billy glanced around.

"Now for something to prop her up with," he said cheerfully.

"What's the matter with one of the propellers?"

"Not a thing. Let's drag her out."

This was done, and placing the end squarely in the center of the canvas, the boys "heaved her up."

The result was to give the canvas the appearance of an Indian tepee, rather than a regulation army tent. It was low, and the boys could not

stand up beneath it. Also the space inside was small and there would be no room to lie down, as they discovered after they had stretched the sides taut and fastened them to improvised stakes they drove into the ground.

"We'll have to curl up around the pole," Billy declared, standing back and surveying their refuge.

They crawled inside and lay flat upon the ground, doubled up like contortionists, for there was no room to stretch out.

"This sand feels like a hot stove," declared Billy. "I'll see what I can find."

He crawled out and searched the wreckage of the big air craft. He returned a few moments later bearing a couple of blankets. He tossed one to Henri.

"Sit on this so you won't scorch," he said.

He spread out his own blanket and sat down. Henri followed suit.

"Well, that's a little better," said Henri cheerfully.

"Only trouble is they are liable to burst into flame," replied Billy.

The boys now took stock of the situation in which they found themselves. They had not the slightest idea where they were, and as Billy said, there was no use of moving, for they didn't know where to go.

"I'm hungry," said Henri a little while later.

"So'm I," declared Billy, "and thirsty."

"Aren't there provisions and water in the aeroplane?"

"That's so," said Billy. "I'll have a look."

Again he crawled out in the hot sun and explored the wreckage. He was back in a few moments with food.

"Where's the water?" demanded Henri.

"Nothing doing," replied Billy cheerfully.

"Nothing doing?"

"Not a thing. Our reservoir smashed when we hit the ground and must have tried to irrigate the desert. In other words, the water has gone."

"Great Scott! We're in a tough fix. What are we going to do?"

Billy became sober.

"Well, old man," he said quietly, "we are in the Dickens of a hole and no mistake. The only plan I have to offer is this: We'll wait till the sun goes down—not that I expect it to make much difference in the terrible heat—but at least it won't burn our heads off. Then we'll start out."

"Which way?" asked Henri.

"You know as much about it as I do. We still have our compass, I found it in the wreckage; but I can't see that that will do much good when we don't know where we are. We'll have to pick out a direction and stick to it as long as we can walk. After that—well, you know as well as I do."

"You are right, as usual," agreed Henri. "We

cannot stay here. But it would be foolish to start out in this broiling sun. We wouldn't last two hours."

"Right you are, old top. Then we'll continue our little siesta until Old Sol hides his head."

Billy made himself as comfortable as possible and closed his eyes. Henri followed his example.

All during the long afternoon the boys lay there, sweltering in the excessive heat. They took off what clothes they could with comfort, and tried in every way they could think of to make the heat bearable.

At last the sun disappeared beneath the distant horizon. It was still hot, but not as hot as before.

Billy crawled out into the open, and Henri followed a moment later.

"We may as well strike camp now," said Henri.

"Right you are again, old top. Let's be on our way."

"What direction?"

Billy considered a moment.

"Let's call it east," he decided.

"You're the doctor."

They set forth as rapidly as the sand would permit.

CHAPTER II.

CAUGHT IN A SAND-STORM.

Billy Barry was a native of the state of Maine, U. S. A. His father was dead, and, until the outbreak of the great European war, Billy had, with his brother Joe, engaged in the manufacture of aeroplanes in the land of his birth.

Soon after the outbreak of hostilities across the water, however, he had gone to France with his chum, Henri Trouville, who had been called home by the knowledge that his mother was in danger of losing the family fortune.

Under the very noses of the armies of Europe, the lads had succeeded in recovering this wealth and restoring it to Henri's mother. They did not accomplish this without danger and adventures of the most startling nature.

Both lads were experts in the construction and flying of air craft of all descriptions; and after their work of recovering the Trouville fortune had terminated, they had hearkened again to the call of the air and had seen service with all the opposing armies.

The adventures of "Our Young Aeroplane Scouts in Germany," while in the service of the Germans,

were not a whit less exciting than had been those with the Allies, as related in "Our Young Aeroplane Scouts in France and Belgium," and their experiences with the forces of the Czar, as told in "Our Young Aeroplane Scouts in Russia," were, if possible, still more dangerous.

The two lads had drawn praise from experienced aerial officers with all the armies of Europe.

The last service in which they had been engaged was with the forces of the Czar of all the Russias. After many adventures they found themselves in Constantinople as prisoners of the Turks.

They had finally managed to escape, and leaving the Turkish capital in a large airship, had set their course for the general direction of the Suez Canal, where they might once more be among white people, and where, also, they might see further action—for even then the forces of the Sultan were said to be advancing against the British troops defending the canal.

In some unaccountable manner—unaccountable because the lads were seasoned sky pilots—they had lost their bearings, and, consequently, when misfortune befell them, had landed in the midst of a desert, they knew not where.

After leaving the shelter of their little tent that evening, Billy and Henri each put his best foot forward, and having decided to go east, pressed on as rapidly as the deep sand would permit.

"This is as bad as walking through a plowed field," declared Billy, as they hurried on. "The only difference is that we don't seem able to bump up against the fence on the opposite side."

The stars came out, and, as is frequently the case in the desert, a fine night breeze sprang up, bringing a refreshing breath. Both lads bared their heads and let the breeze blow through their hair.

"Feels good," commented Henri, as they stopped for a brief moment.

"Right. Now if it would just blow a pitcher of water, or even a river, along, we would be O. K."

But there was no such good fortune, and after a short rest the boys plodded on again.

All night long they walked, stopping occasionally to rest their weary feet, but when the first light of dawn streaked the sky, they could not see that they had materially changed their surroundings.

"Maybe we can sight a port when it gets a little lighter," said Billy hopefully.

"No such luck," commented Henri. "I tell you we are in the middle of the Sahara desert, and that's all there is to it."

"Oh, well——" said Billy, and became thoughtfully silent.

Now it became light enough for them to make out the distant horizon. They gazed about them long and eagerly.

Henri gave a sigh of disappointment.

"Tough luck," was all he said, and they walked on again.

"Old Sol will be on the job again in a few minutes," remarked Billy, "and this time we won't have anything to scare him away with. He'll let us know what he really can do in the way of making it hot for us."

"We should have brought the canvas," replied Henri.

"Looks like we wouldn't have much use for canvas very long," said Billy dryly.

Henri's face was the picture of gloom. He was not naturally pessimistic, but Billy, glancing at him earnestly, saw that his friend had about given up. With each step he seemed to stagger.

"Buck up, old top," said Billy, as cheerfully as he could.

He threw one arm around Henri's shoulders, and slapped him affectionately on the back.

"Never say die," he continued quietly. "We're good for a long walk yet. Old Sol will know he's been in the ring before he puts us down for the count."

Henri smiled feebly.

"I guess he'll be counting over me before long," he replied.

In vain Billy sought to cheer Henri up. Henri refused to be cheered.

Half an hour later the sun came out, as blister-

ing and scorching as the day before. From time to time the lads were forced to stop for breath, while they wiped the perspiration from their faces.

The desert was like an oven.

Henri staggered feebly along. His mouth was open and his tongue swollen, while his breath came in gasps. Billy watched him closely. Somewhat fresher himself, he could not but admire the dogged determination with which his friend hung on.

He spoke no word of sympathy, for fear it might work to Henri's disadvantage.

So they plodded on in silence until—so suddenly that it caused both boys to stop in their tracks—the sun disappeared.

"Wonder who turned out the light?" commented Billy. "Wonder if the old fellow is playing hide and seek with us?"

Henri dropped down in the sand and Billy turned to him quickly.

"Here, here!" he said firmly. "That won't do, you know. There is nothing to see here. What's the use of waiting? Come on!"

He dragged his friend to his feet, and supporting him with an arm, staggered forward again.

For perhaps five minutes he went along and then he stopped still. Shading his eyes with his hand, he stared into the distance.

Where they stood, it was still light; but ahead of them it suddenly became black as night, and Billy

could see that the darkness was bearing down on them with the speed of an express train.

"What's coming off now?" he muttered to himself.

Hardly had the words passed his lips when the sand began to whirl up beside him and a cooling breeze swept across the desert.

With a sudden cry of alarm, Billy kicked Henri's feet out from under him, projecting him to the ground in a heap. Then he toppled over beside him, and forced his friend's face to the ground.

"It's a sand storm!" he cried. "Keep down!"

Henri, almost exhausted as he was, needed no urging. He remained in the position Billy had thrown him, with his arms outstretched.

Billy also crouched low, and it was well that he did so.

Above the prostrate bodies of the two boys the sand swirled high in the air, as the wind increased in violence and went shrieking over them.

Here and there—as the wind swooped down, rose, and then swooped down again—great holes were dug in the sand, and here and there great hills sprang up as if by magic.

The eyes, mouths and ears of both boys were filled with flying sand, and they sputtered and gagged as they struggled for breath.

And still the wind continued to increase in violence.

Billy held Henri's arm in a tight clasp—for he did not want the wind to separate them—and they hung together as closely as they could.

Far toward the horizon, had they been able to see, they would have noticed that it was becoming light again, and that bright sunlight was approaching them as fast as had the darkness a few moments before.

But they could not see this, for their faces were buried in the sand.

Then, as though in a last desperate effort before going on its way, the wind once more swooped down on the boys, and Billy felt Henri's arm torn from his clutch.

He gave vent to a cry of alarm, and reached out with both hands. His fingers came in contact with something, and he grasped this something with all his might and held on grimly.

Even as he did so he was lifted from the ground and felt himself flying through space for what seemed eternity. Then he was set down with a violent shock, and the sun beat down on his head.

The wind had passed. The sandstorm was over.

Billy glanced at the object to which he had held like grim death, and jumped to his feet with a glad cry.

The thing which he had grabbed was Henri's left foot, and the latter now lay stretched out on the sand, face down.

Billy bent over him anxiously, turned him over and raised Henri's head to his knee.

"Henri! Henri!" he called gently. "Speak to me, old fellow. Tell me that you are all right."

After what seemed ages, Henri's eyelids fluttered feebly, and his eyes opened. He raised his head.

"Where did we fall from this time?" he whispered. "I thought I had been flying in the air. I seemed to have wings."

Billy shook his chum gently.

"See if you can stand, old man," he said.

Henri made an effort, and with Billy's assistance, stumbled to his feet.

"There! You are all right!" said Billy cheerfully. "You'll be feeling as chipper as a two-year-old in a few minutes!"

In spite of his recent weakness, Henri now realized what was going on about him and smiled feebly.

"I guess this is where I knock off, Billy," he said quietly. "Leave me here, and try to find your way out. You can do me no good."

"What!" exclaimed Billy. "Is that the way you talk to your old chum? I guess not. We go or stay together."

"But," protested Henri, "you——"

"That's enough of that," said Billy angrily. "Shut up!"

Henri reached for Billy's hand and pressed it

gently. He uttered no word. At Billy's command, he staggered on again for perhaps two minutes, and then fell over in the sand.

Billy sat down beside him in the hot sun.

"I guess this settles it," he muttered to himself. "I guess it's—Hello!"

He broke off with an exclamation. Far to the east, high in the air, a dark shape was rushing toward them. Billy recognized it instantly. It was an airship!

CHAPTER III.

IN THE NICK OF TIME.

THE aeroplane was bearing down on them with the speed of the wind, and Billy, gauging its course with a practiced eye, saw that it would pass almost directly over them.

He jerked his cap from his head, and swung it about wildly, the whole time waving his other arm and dancing about madly. He even forgot that at that distance the aviator would be unable to hear him, and broke into a shout.

"Hi, there!" he yelled at the top of his voice. "Hi!"

The air craft came on steadily.

Billy continued his mad antics and his yelling until he could yell no more, and then sank exhausted to the ground. He was up in a moment, however, and again waved his arms about vigorously and shouted at the top of his voice.

There was a sudden slackening in the speed of the aeroplane, and Billy, with a great thankfulness welling up in his heart, realized that he had been seen.

He turned and bent over Henri, and shook him gently.

"Come to life, old top," he cried exultantly. "Here comes the man to give you a drink."

But Henri did not answer. He was too far gone.

Billy gave up the hopeless task of arousing him, and turned his attention to the aeroplane. It was still some distance in front of him, but was flying at a lower level. It was plain to Billy's experienced eyes that the aviator was maneuvering for a landing.

Slowly the large machine, which Billy now perceived was a large biplane of military design, fluttered toward the ground. Billy could see that it had but one occupant, and he was thankful for this, as he knew that there would be room for both Henri and himself.

The aeroplane settled upon the sand as gracefully as a bird. The aviator leaped out and ran toward Billy. The latter took one swift look at him and uttered an exclamation of dismay.

"Turk!" he muttered briefly. "Glory be! It's worse and more of it!"

Billy felt a bit relieved after thus giving vent to his feelings, and gazed curiously at the approaching man. He was tall and big, and in lieu of the regulation Turkish uniform was attired in wide trousers of a greenish tint. A turban sat snugly upon his head. Two large pistols were held about his waist with a sash, and a short curved sword hung at his side.

"Here's where I do a little sign talking," muttered Billy. "I guess my Turk and his English are about on a par."

He salaamed as the big man hurried up to him and jabbered rapidly in what Billy took to be Turkish.

"I don't get you at all," muttered the boy, "and I guess you wouldn't get me, either. Here goes for signs."

He motioned to Henri's prostrate form, and then went through the motions of drinking.

A slow smile overspread the face of the rescuer, and now, to Billy's surprise, he noted that the man's face was several shades lighter than any Turk he had ever seen. The boy did not think much of this, but unconsciously the fact was imprinted on his mind.

The rescuer hurried back to his machine, and returned quickly with a well-filled canteen. He stooped over Henri, raised his head to his knee, and poured a few drops between the parched lips. Then, wetting one end of his sash, he put it to the lad's forehead.

Henry stirred slightly and moaned. Billy, in spite of his condition, executed a dance of joy on the sand, and even the rescuer seemed pleased. He poured more water down Henri's throat.

"Is he all right?" demanded Billy in English.

The man glanced at him and opened his mouth to

speak; then apparently thought better of it, and remained silent.

Henri freed himself from his rescuer's hands, and sat up. He looked around slowly, and seeing Billy, smiled feebly.

"Back to earth at last, are you?" smiled Billy. "I knew you'd wake up."

"Where did this fellow come from?" asked Henri, glancing at their rescuer.

"Sent by the hand of Providence, I should say," replied Billy. "He can't speak English, so there is no use to thank him."

The man now approached Billy, and extended the canteen, muttering unintelligible words.

"Thanks," said Billy gratefully. "Don't care if I do."

He put the canteen to his lips and drank long and eagerly. Then he passed the canteen back with a bow.

"Your servant for life," he said, and meant it.

The turbaned one now motioned the boys to the aeroplane. Billy lent Henri a supporting hand, and led him to a seat aft. He took the front seat, alongside that occupied by the aviator.

The latter climbed in, started his engine and the machine moved swiftly across the sand. Then he threw over the elevating lever, and the aeroplane soared rapidly into the air.

"This," said Billy, half turning in his seat to call

over his shoulder to Henri, "is the most satisfactory ride I ever took."

"Right you are, Billy," was the reply. "The air for me every time."

Billy peered over the side of the machine, and waved a hand at the distant sand, rapidly slipping by beneath them.

"So long, Sahara," he shouted. "May we meet again—never!" The aviator looked at the lad curiously, then spoke a single word:

"Good!"

Billy fairly jumped. The man had spoken in English.

"Say!" spoke Billy. "I thought you didn't understand English."

Again the man looked at the boy curiously, but this time he did not answer, although the boy noticed that he seemed to be making an effort to speak.

"Rum sort of a beggar," he soliloquized. "Wonder why he refuses to talk? I'll try him again."

He did, but the result was the same. The man did not reply. Half an hour later, however, he turned to Billy and jabbered something in an unintelligible tongue.

Billy shook his head.

"We're properly grateful, and all that," he said quietly, "but if you want to talk to me you'll have to use the language of the good old U. S. A."

"U. S. A.!" repeated the aviator, looking at Billy quizzically.

Again Billy wondered, for he spoke without the slightest trace of accent.

"U. S. A.!" The aviator repeated it, and then became silent.

Billy called back to Henri.

"Say, chum, this fellow speaks English the same as you or I, and still he insists on jabbering in Turk. What'll I do?"

"Talk Turk to him," Henri called back.

"Can't be done," declared Billy, and fell silent himself.

Several times in the next hour the aviator jabbered to Billy, but the lad only shook his head and made signs that he didn't understand. And several times Billy tried him in English, but received no answer.

"Well," said Billy after the last attempt, "if you won't you won't, and that's all there is about it. I wonder where we are going?"

He turned in his seat and put the question to Henri.

"You've got me," was the latter's reply. "Do you know which way we are headed?"

"I should say northwest."

"Then if we are really in the Sahara desert, we must be bound for Tripoli or Algeria."

"What on earth do we want there?"

"We don't want anything, but perhaps our aviator does."

"Perhaps so. What do you suppose he is? Army aviator?"

"By his costume I should say a whirling dervish. However, he's probably on a scout."

"I guess that's about the size of it; but we don't want to go to Algeria. We want to go to Port Said."

"We want to go any place to get away from this desert."

"If we keep up this gait we'll soon be away from it all right," was Billy's comment.

They had been traveling for several hours, and Billy estimated their speed at almost a hundred miles an hour. In this he was nearer right, perhaps, than he knew, for the aeroplane was strong and powerful, and her design showed clearly that in her construction speed had been considered before anything else.

They had been flying at an altitude of about 2,000 feet; but now the aviator descended to a lower level, and beneath them the boys could make out seemingly endless stretches of sand.

Even as they looked straight ahead, however, they saw something else; and as they drew closer, they perceived that this something else was a clump of trees. Beyond this first clump were more trees, and finally an end of the eternal sand.

"We're coming to some place, sure as you're born," Billy called over his shoulder.

"It's about time," replied Henri. "I don't know where it is, and I don't much care. Any old port in a storm, say I."

"My sentiments to the dot," Billy agreed.

The aeroplane had now passed beyond the desert, and was flying over the trees. The aviator descended until they were barely scaling the tree tops, and the speed of the machine had been reduced to a minimum.

Suddenly, directly ahead, the boys made out a large clearing. Over this the airship circled for several moments, going lower and lower, and then it dropped gently to the ground.

The aviator climbed out and motioned the boys to follow him. They, too, stepped to the ground and stretched their cramped limbs. Then they turned their eyes in the direction toward which their rescuer was gazing.

There, almost concealed at the edge of the clearing by a clump of trees, they perceived a large house. At a second glance it didn't look so much like a house as a structure hewed out of solid rock.

The aviator motioned for them to precede him in that direction, and they obeyed without question. Approaching closer, they saw that the apparent house was, in reality, an entrance to some sort of a cave or cavern, on the slope of a small hill.

At the entrance their rescuer signalled them to halt. A moment later he whistled shrilly three times, and half a dozen men, garbed as he was, came forth and surrounded him, jabbering in Turkish.

The aviator pointed to the boys, and four of the others surrounded them and took them by the arms. Billy freed himself with a jerk. His rescuer strode up to him and scowled darkly.

"I say!" cried Billy. "What's the meaning of this?"

There was no reply, and they were shoved roughly into the cave.

CHAPTER IV.

YUSEF.

"WHAT are we up against, anyhow?"

The speaker was Henri. He was seated on a rock in a little compartment off the main section of the cave, three sides of which were of rock, while the opening, facing the cave proper, was barred with iron. It was the evening of their arrival.

"We're up against a rock—in fact, we are bounded by rock, so to speak," replied Billy. "I'll see if I can't get a little light on the subject."

He put his face to the bars and raised his voice in a shout.

"Hey!"

There was no reply to this hail, so Billy tried again and yelled long and loudly.

Directly one of the captors appeared outside the cell and jabbered excitedly. Billy listened to him in deep disgust. The man made violent gestures, and pointed to his mouth.

"What do you suppose he is chattering about?" Billy asked of Henry.

"He means you are making too much noise," replied Henri.

"I see," said Billy. "Well, I don't want this fellow. I want the boss. I can yell louder than that."

Again he raised his voice in a shout. There was the sound of soft footsteps, and their rescuer stood before them. He was attired as before.

"Now," said Billy sternly, "you speak English, and I would like to know what you are going to do with us. Hey?"

The aviator put his hand to his forehead and muttered two words.

"English! Yes!"

Then he became silent, and looked at the boy inquiringly.

Billy grew tired of awaiting an answer to his question.

"All right, bluff it out," he said at last, and turned away in deep disgust.

The aviator came close to the bars of the cell, and shook them to draw the attention of the two lads. Billy and Henri approached.

Their rescuer and captor tapped himself lightly on the breast, and spoke the same word three times.

"Yusef!" he said.

"I get you," said Billy. "That's your name, eh? All right. What about it?"

Yusef pointed to Billy, and spoke rapidly.

"What's he want now?" muttered Billy.

"Guess he wants to know our names," replied Henri.

"Oh," exclaimed Billy. He tapped himself on the breast, as Yusef had done, and said: "Billy!"

Yusef nodded his approval, and turned to Henri.

Henri went through the same performance, and again Yusef nodded.

"Billy! Henri! Billy! Henri!" he repeated over and over again.

Henri turned to Billy.

"Not a bit of an accent," he declared. "He's stringing us."

"Sure; but why? That's what I would like to know."

Henri shrugged his shoulders, a characteristic of his native land.

"You've got me," he admitted.

"Well, we can't make him talk if he doesn't want to; that's sure," said Billy. "Let him alone. Or wait; try him in French."

Henri did so, but Yusef shook his head. Henri had better luck in German, however, for Yusef nodded eagerly.

"I've got him!" cried Henri, raising his voice happily. "He speaks a little German, so I guess we can get along."

"Well, find out something," urged Billy, who knew nothing much of any language save his own.

Henri and Yusef talked long and earnestly, and at length the latter took his departure.

"What's the answer?" demanded Billy, as his

friend turned to him. "What's all this about, anyhow?"

"His name is Yusef," explained Henri, "and he is acting as a scout for the Turkish army which is soon to attack the Suez canal. He says he's a Turk, but I'm right here to state I don't believe it. He doesn't look like one to me."

"Nor to me," agreed Billy. "He's too light. But go on."

"This place is his little home, where he hangs up his hat, or turban, or whatever you call it, when he has nothing else to do. But this time he is here on business. I asked him what this business was, and he told me it was none of my business."

"But what's he keeping us locked up for? What's he going to do with us?"

"He says he hasn't decided yet. He asked me how we came to be in the desert, and I told him it was none of his business. It's just as well not to let him know we are aviators."

"Right you are, old top," Billy agreed. "What else did he say?"

"Not much. Asked me where we lived, and I told him you belonged in the United States, while I claim France as my habitat. Naturally, he has lost all respect for me, and he doesn't seem to have heard of the United States."

"Impossible!"

"I'm just telling you what he said."

"But he understands and speaks a few words of English."

"I reminded him of that, and he politely told me I was mistaken. He seemed to know what English is, but he denied a speaking acquaintance with it."

"But——"

"Oh, I know what you are going to say, but what's the use? I know it as well as you do, but that's all the good it does us."

"But why should he claim ignorance of English?"

"Ask me something easy. I'm no mind reader."

"And he wouldn't say what he was doing here, nor where we are?"

"Yes, he told me where we are; but he was mum as an oyster as to why he's here."

"Well, then, where are we?"

"Algeria, as I suspected."

"That so?"

"Yes."

"H-m-mm. Now, he must be here for a purpose. Can you figure it out?"

"Well, no; but just the same an idea flashed through my head when I first figured out where we are."

"An idea, eh? Let's hear it."

"You remember hearing some time ago that the Turks figured on declaring a Holy War, don't you?"

"Seems to me I gather a faint inkling of what

you are getting at," said Billy slowly. "Let's have the rest of this idea of yours."

"As you know, there are so many Mohammedans in this part of the world that you can't count 'em. Held down as they are by the French, an emissary from the Sultan might stir 'em up a bit. Can you imagine the result?"

"Rather," said Billy dryly. "Murder, massacre and so forth, eh?"

"That's my idea. And with the bulk of the French troops having been sent to join the British expeditionary force at Enos, to help in the forcing of the Dardanelles, they may get away with it. Then they are likely to join forces with the Egyptians, and catch the British on both sides of the Suez canal."

"You seem to be quite a figurer," declared Billy warmly, "and I fear you have about hit the answer. It would be terrible."

"It would," agreed Henri, "and if we weren't cooped up here, we might find some way of preventing it."

"But we are cooped up here. That's what's the matter."

"Yes; but if we could get out, we might manage to walk off with Yusef's aeroplane. I would risk a whole lot to prevent such a horror. Remember, my people are French."

"Do you think I have forgotten it?" demanded Billy; "and I am French for just that reason."

Henri extended his hand, which Billy grasped warmly.

"You are the best chum a fellow ever had," he said quietly.

"I haven't got anything on you," exclaimed Billy.

Henri smiled faintly.

"We'll call it two of a kind then," he said.

"Let's look this thing in the face," said Billy. "The chances are we are the only ones that know this Holy War has been brought so close to a head."

"We don't really know it, remember," interrupted Henri.

"No, but we'll go on the supposition that we have guessed right—and I am sure we have. Now, unless we can sound the warning and give the French and British military authorities an opportunity of thwarting this plot, the worst horror of the world is likely to follow. Am I right?"

Henri nodded.

"Perfectly," he replied quietly.

"All right then. That being the case, it is up to us to give the warning."

"Easier said than done, I am afraid."

"True; but it must be done just the same."

"I'm with you there," agreed Henri. "Show me the way, and I'll go with you through thick and thin."

" 'Where there's a will there's a way,' " quoted Billy.

"Yes," said Henri skeptically, "but the trouble is Yusef stands in the way."

"We'll bowl old Yusef over some day. Great Scott! We can't permit one man to stand in the way of saving thousands of lives!"

"Whatever we may be able to do, must be done quickly," said Henri slowly. "I don't believe Yusef is the man to waste time. We'll have to hurry."

"Hurry it is then," said Billy. "Now put on your thinking cap and get busy. I'll see what I can scare up out of my own head."

They ceased talking and sat down, turning the matter over and over in their minds.

After an hour Billy spoke.

"I say, Henri!"

"What? Have you thought of a plan?"

"No, but I can't help wondering why Yusef should pretend he doesn't understand English. What's he got up his sleeve?"

CHAPTER V.

A BREAK FOR LIBERTY.

"I've just thought of something that knocks your theory into a cocked hat, Henri!"

"What's that?"

"You seem to have forgotten that Tripoli, which lies between Algeria and Egypt, is under Italian suzerainty. Italy won't stand for any such foolishness."

"No, I hadn't forgotten it," replied Henri, "but you must remember that the population of Tripoli is mostly Mohammedan also. They'll join forces with the rest. You see this thing will come off so quickly that all will be caught unprepared."

"Maybe you are right."

"Sure I'm right."

"Very well; but say, I haven't thought of a plan yet. Have you?"

"An idea is beginning to take root in my brain."

"Let's have the gist of it. Maybe I can help."

"Suppose," said Henri, "that when Yusef makes his next call I ask him to allow us to enlist on his side? Once on the outside, not so closely guarded, perhaps we could make a successful break for freedom."

"But would that be honorable?"

"I don't know," doubtfully, "but I should say that the end would justify the means."

Billy turned this matter over in his mind for some minutes.

"I guess you're right," he said at length.

"We'll let her go as she lays then," replied Henri. "I'll tackle Yusef the next time he comes in and see how he accepts my overtures."

They were doomed to a long wait, for Yusef did not put in his appearance again till the following morning, just as one of the others brought food to the boys. Henri hailed him in German, and he advanced to the cell door.

"Herr Yusef," said Henri, showing his ignorance of both German and Turkish, "my friend Billy and I have been cooped up here long enough. We want to get out."

"So?" exclaimed Yusef, raising his eyebrows.

"You bet. Now I'll tell you something. My friend and I are both expert aviators. We have served with the Germans, and have been under fire (Henri didn't think it necessary to say they had served with the Allies also) and I think we could render you valuable service."

"And what makes you think I should be in need of assistance?"

"Why," said Henri with a pleasant smile, "surely

you don't expect us to believe you came here for your health."

"Perhaps I didn't," was the noncommittal reply. "You say you have served with the Germans. Why?"

"Because they asked us to."

"For pay?"

Henri perceived which way the wind was blowing, and he saw no reason to enlighten Yusef.

"We were pretty well treated," he answered guardedly.

Yusef allowed a smile to flit over his countenance.

"I see," he said. "So you are in the game for money, eh? Well, so am I."

"Then we ought to be able to do business," declared Henri.

"Perhaps, perhaps," agreed Yusef. "We shall see. But how am I to know you are expert aviators, as you claim?"

"Try us," replied Henri briefly.

"Good! I will!"

He clapped his hands lustily, and the man who had brought the boys food appeared. Yusef spoke a few words to him in his native tongue, and the man gave him the key to the cell.

Yusef approached and unlocked the door. Also he drew a heavy revolver from his sash.

"No tricks," he said quietly.

He stepped back, and motioned for the boys to emerge.

Billy, who could not understand what was being said, had gathered the trend of the conversation by the few German words he knew, and when Yusef unlocked the door and motioned them out, he knew that Henri's plan, in some measure, at least, had been successful.

He stepped out of the cell a few yards behind his friend.

"Now," said Yusef, "I shall give you a trial immediately. I'll go up with you to make sure you do not play me false."

Henri nodded.

Two of Yusef's men appeared when he again clapped his hands. After a few brief words they hurried away, and, presently from a hangar just outside the cave, pushed the same machine which had brought the boys there.

Yusef, with revolver still in hand, examined the engine, propellers and steering apparatus, and then nodded to the boys to climb in.

Billy jumped to the wheel and Henri to the engine. This necessarily left the rear seat for Yusef. He climbed in.

Yusef nodded to Henri, who passed the word to Billy. The engine snorted and the machine began to glide along the ground. Then Billy threw over

the elevating lever and the machine soared into the air.

Under Billy's firm hand it shot straight up 2,000 feet, then 3,000 feet and more. Here Billy laid her out for a straightaway course. He threw the speed lever over to the last notch, and they dashed through the air at a furious pace.

For perhaps fifteen minutes Yusef said nothing, and then he told Henri to order Billy to turn and return to the hangar. Henri leaned over and spoke to Billy.

But the machine, instead of coming about, seemed to gather speed as it dashed straight onward.

Yusef presented his revolver at Billy's back. But he did not fire. To do so would have caused the death of all, and Yusef realized it.

He turned the revolver from Billy so that it covered Henri's back and uttered a shout.

Billy, realizing that something was wrong, glanced back over his shoulder, the while retaining a steady hold on the wheel.

He saw Henri's plight in an instant, and instantly reduced the speed of the machine, and brought it about.

Yusef lowered his revolver with a low growl.

Half an hour later the machine was again in the hangar, and the three had reëntered the cave. Yusef turned on Henri angrily.

"You tried to trick me," he accused.

Henri shook his head.

"My friend explained when we left the machine," he replied. "He did not understand the order."

Yusef was skeptical.

"Why did he turn so suddenly then, without further orders?"

Henri translated to Billy. Then he turned to Yusef.

"He says that when he saw the revolver leveled at me, it came to him in a flash that he had not understood," he replied.

Yusef looked relieved.

"I am glad to hear that," he said. "I thought you were trying to play me false, and if I were sure of it——" He tapped the butt of his revolver significantly.

Henri shrank back in well-simulated fear.

"We—we wouldn't do that," he said.

Perceiving that the boy was apparently badly frightened, Yusef smiled.

"You had better not," he said. "You have shown me that you are all that you claim when it comes to aeroplanes, and if I can make use of you, I shall make it worth your while."

"How much?" demanded Henri, thinking it would be well to make Yusef believe they were after all they could get.

"I shall pay you whatever your services are worth," was the reply.

Henri expostulated.

"We should know in advance," he protested. "We might do the work, and then not be sufficiently paid."

Yusef drew himself up.

"When I say I shall pay well, I mean it," he declared grandly. "No one shall dare to dispute my word."

Again Henri drew back in well-simulated surprise.

"All right," he agreed.

"Until I have need of you," continued Yusef, "I shall return you to your cell."

He motioned for the two boys to move on, and they did so. Yusef closed the door behind them and turned the key in the lock.

Henri waited until he had gone and then turned to Billy.

"Pretty tough we couldn't make it," he said. "I knew what you were up to, but I couldn't subdue Yusef. He was armed and I wasn't."

"I was scared to death for a minute," Billy confessed. "I was afraid he would pull the trigger before I could come about. If he had shot you, however, I would have dumped him out if I had to go with him."

Henri smiled.

"I have no doubt of that," he replied.

"Now," said Billy, "let me know what all this

powwow has been about. You know I haven't hardly been able to understand a word, although I was able to catch a phrase now and then."

Henri explained quickly.

"And you think he will trust us after this?" asked Billy.

"I don't know. I hope so."

"We'll get this old Turk yet," declared Billy. "He'll fool around with us a little too much, and then it'll be good night Yusef."

"The time can't come any too soon for me," declared Henri.

"Nor me. But say, we are liable to have quite a strenuous time lifting Mr. Turk's scalp this afternoon or this evening. Think I'll try and catch forty winks."

He stretched himself out on the hard little pallet on one side of the cell, and Henri did the same on the other.

"Here's hoping I dream out the proper solution of what to do with Mr. Yusef," said Billy, as he closed his eyes.

"And the proper way to save the thousands now in danger," said Henri. "Don't forget them, Billy."

"Nope, I won't forget 'em. It's got to be done, and we're the little tots who have got to do it. Good night!"

CHAPTER VI.

A STRUGGLE IN THE AIR.

DARKNESS deep and intense had settled down when Billy and Henri once more found themselves standing alongside the large aeroplane. This time Yusef himself took the wheel and motioned Henri to the engine. Billy took his position aft.

The machine was poised for flight and soon went soaring into the air.

Henri attended strictly to his duties and did not attempt to converse with Billy. The craft was traveling at tremendous speed and Henri was kept busy.

"This Yusef is some flier himself, if you ask me," shouted Billy.

He had expected no response, so he was not disappointed when Henri did not reply.

"Wonder what the Old Turk is up to?" Billy asked himself repeatedly as they flew along through the darkness.

Yusef called to Henri to shut off his engine, and himself reduced the speed. Billy realized that the machine was dropping rapidly. Ten minutes later it settled upon the ground with scarcely a jar.

Billy and Henri glanced about curiously as they

stepped out behind Yusef. It was still pitch dark, but they could make out shadowy shapes on all sides of them. These they took to be trees, and they were right.

Yusef now produced a flashlight of extraordinary size. He fixed the button so that it would glow steadily, and then stood it upright on the ground. A shaft of light extended toward the sky.

"What's the idea?" asked Billy of Henri.

"Search me," was the brief reply.

The answer was to come a few minutes later.

Above them the boys suddenly heard a loud swishing and whirring. They recognized the sound instantly.

"Airship," said Billy quietly.

High in the air, made dimly visible by the shaft of light that reached toward the heavens, a dark shape fluttered. It settled gently, and then, disappearing from the flashlight's ray, came to the ground a few yards away.

Yusef approached this newcomer, and Billy and Henri followed him.

"Deep, dark secret of some kind," whispered Henri. "It's a rendezvous, that's what it is."

"You've called the turn, old-timer," agreed Billy.

From the second aeroplane stepped a form, and even in the darkness the boys saw that the shadowy figure loomed up fully as big as the form of Yusef. The two men embraced, and then sat down, cross-

legged, on the ground. Apparently Yusef had forgotten the presence of Billy and Henri.

"Shall we make a break for it?" whispered Henri.

"We'll see what's up first," said Billy quietly.

He made a slight detour, and approached the sitting figures from another direction. He crept close to them and listened attentively. Henri followed.

The men spoke in low voices, and greatly to Henri's relief, in German.

"All's ready then?" asked Yusef.

"Yes," was the reply, "and the time is the seventeenth. How far is the Sultan's army from the Suez Canal?"

"Two days' march. But you will not wait for that attack?"

"No, we shall strike within two days, and then hurry on to catch the cursed British between two fires. Did you bring the money?"

Yusef produced a packet, and it changed hands.

"You'll find it all there," he said.

"Good. Have you seen Sheik Bedar?"

"No, I shall see him tomorrow and tell him to be ready to join you when you march through."

"Good! That is all, then."

The two men rose, and Billy and Henri hurried back to the aeroplane, where they stood quietly when Yusef came up. He looked at them closely, and then, apparently satisfied, returned to the other machine.

Quickly Henri repeated to Billy the gist of the conversation he had overheard.

"Well, what's the answer?" demanded Billy.

"The answer is that the tribesmen are prepared to rise. We must do something immediately?"

"All right. What?"

"I don't know."

"Well," said Billy, "you just leave it to me."

The reappearance of Yusef interrupted further conversation. He signalled the boys to climb in, and they did so. There was a whirring of wings as the other aeroplane rose in the air, and a moment later the boys also were flying through space, in the same positions in which they had come.

It was lighter now, bright stars permitting them to see some distance ahead.

Billy leaned forward in his seat, stretched out his two arms, and as his hands grasped Yusef by the throat, he shouted:

"Grab the wheel, Henri!"

Henri's hands clutched the wheel at the moment that Yusef was dragged backward by Billy's strong arms. The big aeroplane rocked crazily, but Henri steadied it.

Now Yusef was a strong man, and Billy realized even before he made the attempt that he was no match for the Turk in a physical encounter unless a surprise did the work. He had also counted upon the fact that Yusef could not turn on him without

the danger of capsizing the craft, and he didn't expect him to do that.

Yusef, pulled backward, kicked out with his feet, narrowly missing Henri.

"Down, Henri!" cried Billy.

Henri quickly shut off the engine and set the planes for a volplane to earth.

They swooped down rapidly, and struck the ground with a shock.

Realizing that they were upon the ground, Yusef struggled harder than before. One of Billy's hands slipped, and he cried out.

"Quick, Henri! Grab him from behind."

Henri was out of the aeroplane and around on the other side in a jiffy. Even at that moment Yusef freed himself of Billy's clutch entirely, and with a roar reached for his throat.

Henri wasted no time on thought. With a bound he was at Yusef's side. His arm shot out and his hand clutched one of the revolvers in the Turk's sash. Quickly reversing the weapon, he brought the butt down on Yusef's head with all his force.

For a moment Billy felt the fingers at his throat grip him tighter, and then they relaxed and Yusef fell over to the ground.

Billy stepped out of the aeroplane and shook himself, feeling his throat tenderly with his fingers.

"That fellow is as strong as an ox," he declared. "You bumped him off just in time, old top."

Henri thrust the revolver in his pocket, and leaning over their fallen foe relieved him of his other weapons. Then, from a canteen, he sprinkled a little water on Yusef's face, and standing back, waited for him to come to.

Five minutes later Yusef groaned feebly. Then he sat up and looked about in the darkness.

"Hello," he said. "What's the matter?"

"Gee! we scared a little English out of him, anyhow," remarked Billy.

He seized Yusef by the arm and dragged him from the machine.

"Stand up," he commanded.

Yusef got to his feet. As his gaze fell upon the two boys, comprehension slowly began to dawn on him. He broke into a torrent of Turkish, gesticulating angrily. Billy interrupted him.

"We've got your number," he said. "Talk English."

Yusef checked his torrent of words, and eyed him curiously. He opened his mouth as though to speak, then closed it without saying a word.

"He's going to keep up the bluff," said Henri. "I'll talk to him in German."

He did so, and Yusef whirled upon him angrily.

"So you played me false," he snarled. "I was a fool to trust you!"

"So you were," replied Henri pleasantly. "And

now you shall be the passenger, until we can turn you over to the British authorities."

Yusef flew into a rage, and seemed about to leap upon Henri. The latter drew back several paces, and drew one of Yusef's revolvers.

"Stay where you are," he commanded.

Yusef thought better of his plan, and stood still.

In the meantime Billy examined the aeroplane to make sure that it had not been damaged by its quick drop to earth. He looked up relieved.

"The old bird's O. K.," he told Henri, "and there is plenty of juice to take us wherever we want to go. Let's be on our way."

From his pocket he produced a small compass, with which to get his bearings.

"We might as well tie our friend here up a bit," interposed Henri.

"You bet. I had almost forgotten about that. What'll we tie him with?"

"What's the matter with his own sash?"

"Just the thing."

"Hold this gun on him then, while I do the work."

Billy took the weapon from his chum's hand, and trained it on Yusef. Henri laid hold of the sash.

"Very thoughtful of you to bring this along for us," he told him in German.

Yusef snarled an imprecation.

"Now don't be angry," pleaded Henri. "We

wouldn't hurt you for the world, you know. Just be a good little boy and do as we tell you."

He had unwound the sash, and now proceeded to bind Yusef's arms and legs with it. Then he stood back and surveyed his work critically.

"I guess that'll hold you," he said approvingly, "eh, Billy?"

"Looks like it. Help me dump him into the machine."

They laid hold of him and tumbled him into the seat aft. Billy looked around.

"Here's a piece of rope," he exclaimed. "We'll tie him in, just to be on the safe side."

This done to their satisfaction, the boys also climbed into the machine, and soon were flying aloft, Billy at the wheel.

"Whereaway?" asked Henri.

"Guess we had better set a course in the general direction of Cairo. It's a long way and a weary one."

"We can't reach there before tonight," said Henri. "Do you think we can make it?"

Billy's reply was characteristic.

"We'll make it or bust," he said briefly.

CHAPTER VII.

YUSEF KEEPS MUM.

In and near Cairo are some of the most interesting antiquities in the historical country of Egypt.

A few miles to the northeast are vestiges of ancient Heliopolis, the Oz or Bethshemesh of Scripture, famous for its temple of the sun, while a little to the north of Cairo, and on the east side of the river Nile, are the ruins of Memphis, the capital of Egypt in the days of Moses.

Cairo is the largest city in Africa and has a population well over 650,000. It was built on the ruins of Babylon. Its streets are unpaved, but the city is one of the greatest thoroughfares in the world, being the gathering point of the caravans which conduct the trade between upper Egypt and the Mediterranean and Arabia.

The finest building in Cairo is the mosque of the Sultan. Opposite to Cairo is the village of Ghizeh; and here, scattered along the western bank of the Nile, are the pyramids—those stupendous works which seem to rival in magnitude the operations of nature. They are about sixty in number, extending along the slope to the river some sixty miles.

The largest are those of Cheops and Cephrenes.

The first is 693 feet square at its base and 500 feet high. It was built about 4,000 years ago. It has been penetrated and found to have several long galleries. It is supposed the pyramids were built as sepulchres for the kings.

About 600 feet from this is the Cyclopean image of the Sphinx, representing a human head, with the body of a lion. The whole figure is sixty feet high and a hundred and twenty-five feet long.

As the aeroplane in which Billy and Henri, with their prisoner, drew close to this historical city, these great pyramids, rearing high in the air, were the first objects upon which their eyes rested.

"What are those things sticking up there in the distance?" asked Billy.

"Look like the pyramids," replied Henri, "and I'm glad to see them, for it shows we must have shaped our course aright."

Billy mused in silence for some moments.

"They tell me that this Nile is some river," he said at last. "I'll be glad to have a look at it."

"And so will I. Besides which we'll have a closer look at the pyramids and the Sphinx."

"The Sphinx? That's right! The Sphinx does hang out here. I'd forgotten. My history seems to have been neglected."

Henri smiled.

"You'll have a chance to brush up a little at first hand," he replied.

All during the trip Yusef had sat in silence, but now he made his presence known with a subdued growl.

"What are we going to do with him?" demanded Henri, jerking his thumb over his shoulder.

"Turn him over to the English. He's probably worked mischief enough in his time. A nice black dungeon might do him good."

The aeroplane at length came to earth on the board racing ground of the Khedivial Club, which was filled to overflowing with British and native troops, being at that moment put through a practice drill.

As the aeroplane came fluttering down it was the center of all eyes. The drill, for the moment, was forgotten, as the officers left their stations and hurried forward.

As Henri climbed out, he felt a heavy hand on his shoulder. He looked up into the eyes of a colonel of infantry.

"Who are you and where do you come from?" was the question.

Henri introduced himself, and then presented his friend.

The officer gazed at them in amazement.

"And are you the two young aviators of whom we have heard so much?" he asked.

"Well, I don't know about that," laughed Henri. "Still, I believe we have quite a reputation."

"Are you the same lads who so recently were in the service of the Russians?"

"The same," replied Henri with a bow.

"And who have you bound in the machine there?"

Henri explained.

"We'll take care of him," replied the colonel grimly. "I have heard of him before. There is not a brainier nor more daring man with the whole Turkish host. You have made an important capture."

"Let's have him out, Henri," said Billy.

They stepped to the machine and cut the rope that bound Yusef, and then untied the sash about his arms and legs.

Yusef stepped out and stretched himself. His turban had been lost, and his closely cropped light hair was in evidence for the first time. The colonel looked at him closely.

"This fellow is no Turk," he declared. "He looks like an Englishman."

He addressed Yusef in English, but the latter only shook his head.

"It's no use, sir," said Billy. "I'm sure he understands English, but he won't admit it."

The colonel turned to his orderly.

"Pass the word for the corporal of the guard," he commanded.

A moment later the corporal and a squad of soldiers advanced.

"Lock him up," said the colonel briefly, with a wave of his hand toward Yusef.

The soldiers surrounded him, and the corporal was about to give the word to march, when suddenly an officer, who had been gazing intently at Yusef, dashed forward.

He thrust aside one of the soldiers, and stood directly in front of Yusef and held out his hand.

"Charley!" he exclaimed. "What are you doing here like this?"

Yusef gazed at him and seemed about to speak; but no words came from his parted lips, although he continued to stare at the officer.

"Don't you know me, Charley?" demanded the officer again.

Yusef made no sign of recognition, and the officer turned away sadly.

"Captain Richardson," it was the colonel who spoke, "do you know this man?"

"I thought I did, sir, but I must have been mistaken. Still, the prisoner does not look like a Turk."

"He's no Turk," declared the colonel positively.

He made a signal to the corporal, and Yusef was led away.

The colonel turned to the boys.

"I shall be glad to have you accompany me to my quarters," he said. "General Brush will probably desire to question you. Your aeroplane shall be taken care of."

The boys nodded their compliance, and followed the colonel as he strode away.

"This fellow Yusef is too deep for me," declared Billy as they walked along. "There is something queer about him."

"That's plain enough," agreed Henri. "Who do you suppose he is?"

"You've got me."

They followed the colonel to where General Brush, in command of the British forces in Cairo, was installed in a large stone residence in the center of the city. They were admitted to his presence immediately.

Here Henri told of their experiences since they had escaped from Constantinople, and of their meeting with Yusef in the desert. He also spoke of their trip to Algeria, and of his suspicions regarding the Holy War.

"You are a shrewd lad," said the general, when he had concluded, "and you guess right. We have had wind of it before now, and have taken all precautions. Also the French in Algeria are ready for the uprising. When it comes the tribesmen, taken by surprise, will be exterminated."

"I thought we would be the first to bring the news, general," said Henri.

"You should be thankful that you were not," was the reply, "for had you been, it is doubtful if we could have got word to Algiers in time."

The two boys nodded their understanding of this.

"And what are you boys planning to do now?" asked General Brush.

"Why, we hadn't decided exactly," said Henri. "If we can be of any further assistance to you, however, we shall be pleased."

The general drummed upon the table with his finger tips for some moments before replying.

"If you mean that," he said at length, "I can make use of you."

Billy and Henri were happy in a second.

"How, sir?" demanded Billy eagerly.

"Scouting," was the reply. "I shall send you direct to General Bryant, in command of the forces guarding the Suez canal. He can make use of you."

"We shall be glad to go, sir," said Billy. "In fact, we were bound for the canal when we missed our course and landed in the desert."

"I have an important dispatch that must be delivered to General Bryant by morning," said General Brush. "You shall take it."

"Thank you, sir."

"Report to me tonight at eight o'clock then. By the way, have you any idea who this Yusef may be?"

"No, sir, not the slightest," replied Henri.

The general summoned his orderly. He informed him where the prisoner was under guard, and added:

"Have him brought here immediately."

The orderly saluted and took his departure.

"Make yourselves at home until he returns, boys," said the general. "I have some work to do."

He turned to the litter of papers and documents on his desk, and was soon hard at work.

Half an hour later the orderly came in excitedly. He hurried across the room, and came to attention before the general.

"Well?" demanded the latter, looking up.

"The prisoner, sir," he exclaimed breathlessly, "has escaped!"

Billy and Henri gave vent to exclamations of consternation.

Even General Brush glared at the officer sharply. Evidently he could not believe he had heard aright.

"What did you say?" he demanded.

"The prisoner has escaped, sir!"

CHAPTER VIII.

INSIDE THE CHEOPS.

General Brush leaned back in his chair, and asked quietly:

"How?"

"I was bringing him here, sir. I had a guard of four men, and I was walking in front. There was a commotion behind me and I turned just in time to see the prisoner dash down the street, leaving two of my men on the ground. I took a shot at him with my revolver, but missed. My fourth man followed suit with his rifle, but the prisoner disappeared around a corner just as he fired."

"And you couldn't catch him?"

"No, sir. When we reached the corner he had disappeared, and no one seemed to have seen him."

"Very good," replied the general. "Order a thorough search of the city. He must be captured at all hazards. You may go."

The officer saluted and left the room.

"Glory be!" exclaimed Billy. "That's what I call tough luck. What's the use of our capturing a man if they turn round and let him loose the next minute?"

The general was forced to smile at Billy's wrath.

"We'll get him," he replied simply.

"I don't know whether you will or not," declared Billy. "He must be a pretty slippery customer, and the chances are he has a house full of friends around here some place."

The general arose from his chair, and the two boys realized that the interview was at an end.

"Be sure and report to me at eight o'clock," were the commander's last words.

Billy and Henri drew themselves up and gave the military salute. The next moment they were in the street again.

"Well, old top, what's the program for the afternoon?" demanded Billy.

"What do you say to a look at the pyramids?"

"You're the doctor. Let's mosey along."

"It's quite a ways across there," said Henri, waving his hand toward the west. "Let's use Yusef's aeroplane. It's ours now. The spoils of war, you know."

"How are we going to find it?"

"We'll have to hunt up the colonel. He knows where it is."

"Lead on," said Billy, and they turned their faces toward the colonel's quarters.

That gentleman was in, and gave them the necessary directions, together with a written order for the air craft. Armed with this the lads made their

way to where the aeroplane had been taken, and after filling up their tanks, once more took to the air.

Theirs was not the only craft in the air that afternoon. Ahead of them, as they turned toward the pyramids, they made out another machine going swiftly in the same direction.

"On his way to the canal, I guess," was Billy's comment.

"Well, he's traveling some," declared Billy. "He's almost over the top of the biggest pyramid now, and if he doesn't rise a little he's due for a smash-up."

"Right you are. Now—look out!"

Billy uttered this exclamation as he saw that the plane ahead of them would not clear the top of the pyramid.

Gallantly the aviator sought to lift his ship, but it was too late. It went up a trifle, enough to avoid smashing into the pyramid head first, but it did not clear the peak, which caught the craft underneath, and seemed to rip it from stem to stern.

The airship reeled at this death wound, but it did not collapse immediately, as Billy and Henri expected it would. Its wings were still outspread, and it glided gently toward the earth. As it neared the ground, a sudden gust of wind caught it, and it turned over suddenly.

Billy and Henri uttered an exclamation of alarm, as they saw the aviator pitch to the ground.

Billy threw over his own wheel, and dashed for the spot as Henri shut off the engine.

"He's a goner," said Billy quietly.

"Sure—no, he's not, either. Look!"

Henri pointed to the ground, from which the aviator now arose. They saw him glance at them as they descended, and then he turned and took to his heels, disappearing around the side of the pyramid even as they came to a landing.

"Now, what do you suppose he did that for?" asked Henri.

"Maybe this is not his day to receive," replied Billy dryly. "I guess we are unwelcome callers."

"Shall we go on, then?"

Billy glanced about him. They were still several hundred yards from the largest of the pyramids, the one behind which the fallen aviator had disappeared.

"To tell the truth," said Billy, "I have a hunch there is something wrong about that fellow. Let's see if we can find him. You go around one way and I'll take the other. We won't give him a chance to sneak out and make off with our machine."

This plan was agreed upon, and the boys approached the huge pyramid from opposite sides. All the way around they walked, and met behind it. They had seen no sign of the aviator.

"Where did he get to?" demanded Henri.

"Must have grown wings, I guess," was Billy's reply. "Let's have another look."

"What's this?" said Billy suddenly, as they came upon an opening in one side of the pyramid.

"Door, I guess," replied Henri briefly.

"I didn't know you could get inside these things."

"Oh, yes. They were first penetrated years ago."

"Then this must be the way our friend went. Let's go in."

They went through the opening, and, once inside, gazed about with the greatest curiosity.

"We're in the Cheops," remarked Henri.

"In what?" demanded Billy.

"The Cheops."

"Say, you're getting as bad as old Yusef. You'll have to speak English."

"The Cheops," Henri explained, "is the name of the largest of the pyramids—the one in which we are now standing."

"Why didn't you say so in the first place? Well, let's have a look for our friend."

They didn't have to look very far. As they turned, they saw a figure slinking stealthily toward the opening they had just come through. He wore the red and blue facings of a French officer.

"There he goes!" shouted Billy and ran after him. "He's a Frenchman."

Henri raised his voice and spoke in French, but the man did not stop. He dashed out the opening,

and the boys ran after him. Outside they were treated to the surprise of their lives.

The figure had stopped just outside, and now confronted them with leveled revolver. Billy and Henri halted abruptly.

"Well, if it isn't our old friend Yusef," said Billy calmly. "How are you, old man?"

He made as if to advance, but Yusef halted him with a threatening motion of his revolver.

"Oh, if you're going to be nasty about it, I'll stay here, of course," continued Billy.

He stopped.

Yusef spoke to Henri in German.

"What's he say?" asked Billy.

"He says for us to get in our machine and to be quick about it."

"Well, it looks as though he is boss. Guess we'd better do it."

They approached the aeroplane slowly, followed by Yusef. They climbed in the machine without a word, Yusef motioning for Billy and Henri to take the front seats. He climbed in.

Then he spoke a few words to Henri, who was at the wheel, and the aeroplane left the ground.

"Which way?" asked Henri, eyeing the revolver in Yusef's hand.

"East," was the reply.

Henri headed in that direction, and as he did so

he perceived a second air craft approaching in the distance.

Yusef ordered the course of the plane changed immediately, and Billy noticed they were flying straight toward the massive head of the Sphinx.

Yusef was jabbering excitedly in German, and Henri, under the muzzle of his revolver, obeyed his orders implicitly. Just above the Sphinx he ordered Billy to cut off his engine.

Then the machine glided down, and came to rest squarely upon the head of the Sphinx.

"I say! What's this for?" demanded Billy of his chum.

"Orders," was Henri's brief response.

With the barrel of his revolver, Yusef motioned for them to climb out. Then he gazed for a moment at the aeroplane bearing down on them. He muttered a few words to himself, and then climbed into the pilot's seat.

He took one last glance at the two boys, who were standing close and eyeing him curiously, then he started the engine and threw over the elevating lever. The aeroplane seemed to leap in the air, and making a detour so as to avoid, if possible, the approaching plane, Yusef once more headed toward the east.

So sudden had been this move that the boys simply stood still, with their mouths literally hanging open. Billy was the first to speak.

"Well, what do you know about that?" he demanded.

"A rotten, shabby trick," declared Henri, in great wrath.

"And here we are," exploded Billy, "marooned sixty feet in the air on the top of this old Sphinx. How are we going to get down?"

And Henri replied:

"Ask me an easy one!"

CHAPTER IX.

AN OLD FRIEND.

Billy drew as near the sloping sides of the head of the Sphinx as he deemed compatible with safety and peered over.

"Looks like a mile down there," he said, drawing back. "Want to have a look?"

"No need to," replied Henri. "I can shut my eyes and tell you what it looks like."

Again Billy peered down.

"Hello," he said, "the Sphinx has ears. Think you can climb down one of them, Henri?"

"I don't think I'm going to try."

"We might climb down a little ways and then drop."

"I guess it would be our last drop."

"You're right," agreed Billy after another investigation. "I guess it's up to us to bide here for a spell."

He sat down.

Suddenly there was a whirring above them. Both lads looked up, and cried out with relief.

The pilot of the airship that had been bearing down on them had perceived the two figures on top of the Sphinx and had come down to investigate.

"Hello, you fellows, what are you doing there?" came a voice in English.

"Viewing the scenery," exclaimed Billy in deep disgust. "What did you think?"

Fortunately his voice did not reach the men in the aeroplane, which hovered closer overhead now, so they did not catch his sarcasm. Billy saw that the machine was a British aerial craft, and manned by two men.

Henri shouted a reply to their question.

"That chap put us here," and pointed toward Yusef speeding away in the distance.

"Who is he?" asked one of the aviators.

"Turk," replied Henri, and would have said more, but the British officers did not wait.

The machine came about in a wide circle, and started after Yusef.

Billy raised his voice in a shout.

"Hi!" he called.

The Britons heard him, for they turned in their seats and waved at the boys. Billy shook his fist at them.

Then he turned to Henri with a slow smile.

"Ditched again," he said briefly.

Billy's regret was so apparent that Henri burst into a laugh. Billy turned on him.

"What's funny?" he demanded.

"You are," replied Henri. "Cheer up, it's not so bad. We'll get down all right."

"Will, eh? Maybe you'll tell me how?"

"Well, I don't know," Henri admitted.

"I thought not. Which is why I can't see what you are laughing about," and Billy turned and looked after the two disappearing aeroplanes aggrievedly.

Again he shook his fist after them.

"Maroon us, will you?" he muttered. "We'll get you yet, Mr. Yusef."

The sun was shining brightly, and Billy and Henri at length became conscious of the fact that it was very hot on top the Sphinx.

"We might as well have broiled in the desert as here," muttered Billy. "Wish we had a parasol."

"You might as well wish for the moon," replied Henri.

"Well, we've got the sun, haven't we? I didn't wish for that, but it's here, anyhow. You can't tell what a good wish will bring."

The hours passed slowly, and the boys made themselves as comfortable as possible in the broiling sun. They shed their coats, and put them across their faces, but this gave little relief. They found this position much more comfortable than any other, however.

For this reason they did not see a huge shape rushing toward them later in the afternoon, and they did not hear it, either, for that matter. The

first they knew they had callers was when a voice exclaimed in English,

"I see you are still here."

The two lads bounded to their feet.

Above them circled the same aeroplane that had given chase to Yusef.

"For the love of Mike get us off of here," shouted Billy.

"All right," came the reply, and the machine settled down on the Sphinx.

"Did you get him?" were Henri's first words.

"No. We didn't even get close enough to take a shot at him, and we must have followed him more than a hundred miles. He was still going east when we gave up the chase."

The pilot motioned the boys into the rear of the machine, and both gave sighs of relief as they climbed in.

"Back where we belong once more," was Billy's comment as they arose into the air.

"You bet," agreed Henri. "Have you noticed that every time we get on the ground something goes wrong?"

"Have I noticed it?" exclaimed Billy. "Well, rather. I think we had better build a big one and stay up here for keeps."

"Not a bad idea at that," agreed Henri.

The plane sped back toward the city, and an hour later the lads were again strolling about the streets.

"Whither away now?" asked Henri.

"Suit yourself, old chum. Whatever you say goes for me, too."

"Well, I've an appetite like a grizzly. What do you say to a little feed?"

"I'm not so strong on the word little. But the word feed hits me right where I live. Show me the place."

"I saw something that looked like a restaurant back down the street a piece," said Henri.

Billy turned in his tracks without another word, and they retraced their steps.

"Hope they have something inside that a white man can eat," said Henri devoutly, as they turned in toward a little shop.

"We'll take a chance," declared Billy.

They went inside, where a square meal was soon transferred to their inside.

"Well," said Billy, when they again stepped outside, greatly refreshed, "we may as well make a search for the colonel."

"May as well, I guess. We'll have to put in the time some place until the hour we are to report to General Brush.

"How do you suppose we'll take the trip to the canal? Airship?"

"Hope so. I guess the general will provide one for us."

They continued their walk. Suddenly, from down

the street ahead of them, came sounds of confusion and a terrible din.

"Something up," exclaimed Billy, breaking into a run. "Come on."

Henri dashed after his friend.

In the center of a crowd of howling natives, who brandished clubs and knives, a single man, in the uniform of the British army, was defending himself against overwhelming numbers.

Quickly Henri passed one of Yusef's revolvers to Billy.

"Take this," he shouted. "We can't stand for anything like that!"

"All right," grunted Billy. "But don't shoot unless you have to!"

They dashed into the thick of the melee, never stopping to think of their own danger, and struck out right and left with their clubbed revolvers.

"Take that!" cried Billy through his teeth, and a native, struck over the head, went to the ground.

Henri also gave a good account of himself and by a separate effort the boys broke through the line to the side of the man they now perceived was an officer.

"How are you, Billy? How are you, Henri?" cried the man.

The boys stopped suddenly, and lowered their weapons.

"Keep those guns up," cried the officer, "and hold

'em off. 'Tis only me, your old friend, Sergeant Scott!"

"Sergeant Scott!" exclaimed both boys in a single breath.

"Right you are, but I haven't time to shake hands with you now. Here they come again. Ready!"

Sergeant Scott, instead of waiting to be attacked, leaped into the thick of the natives, and the boys followed suit. Right and left they struck out with a will, and the natives, unused to this method of fighting, went down on all sides.

But there were too many of them for the three friends, and it is hard telling what would have happened had not the clattering of many hoofs interrupted the proceedings.

The natives broke and ran, as down the street, at a rapid trot, came a squadron of cavalry.

The boys returned their revolvers to their pockets, and Sergeant Scott wiped the blood from his face with a single movement of his arm. Then he extended a hand to both lads.

"We'll shake now," he said.

They did so heartily.

"I never expected to see either of you alive again," declared the sergeant. "It seems to me I heard something about you being in the service of the Russians not long ago."

"We were there," declared Billy.

"Then I guess the Germans knew it," was the sergeant's dry response.

The troop of cavalry came to a halt before them, and an officer questioned the sergeant.

"All right now," he replied. "We don't need you."

"But what are you doing here, sergeant?" exclaimed Billy.

"Well, it's not a long story. My regiment was among those withdrawn from Belgium to send to Egypt. I've been here two weeks. That's all there is to it."

"But I didn't know any troops had been withdrawn from the western front in Europe."

"Neither do most other people," was the reply. "If they did there would be a holler. But here we are, a couple of thousand of us."

"And Colonel Bainbridge?"

"Dead! Killed in action."

The boys were stunned by this piece of news.

"But come," said the sergeant; "I'll take you to my quarters, and we'll have a long talk."

The lads followed him down the dirty street.

CHAPTER X.

TOWARD THE CANAL.

PROMPTLY at eight o'clock Billy and Henri stood before General Brush.

"I see you are on time," said the general. "It is well. Promptness is a virtue and there are many who do not possess it."

The boys bowed their acknowledgment of this praise.

From a pigeonhole in his desk the commander produced a document, which he put into Billy's hand.

"You will see that this is placed in General Bryant's hands at the earliest possible moment," he instructed. "That is all."

"But, general," exclaimed Billy, as the officer turned back to his desk, "how are we to get there? And where shall we find General Bryant?"

"You will find General Bryant in Port Said most likely," was the reply. "As for your means of getting there, why not use your airship?"

Until that moment the lads had forgotten that General Brush had not been acquainted with their misfortune and the flight of Yusef. Billy explained.

"So he has gone clear, eh?" mused the general, when Billy had concluded. "Well, it's too bad."

He turned to his desk and wrote rapidly.

"Here," he said, handing Billy another slip of paper, "is an order for another aeroplane. You will present it to Major Brown, and he will fit you out."

The lads saluted and took their departure.

Major Brown wasted no time in procuring an aeroplane for them, and half an hour after they had left the general's tent, they were flying in the direction of Port Said.

They went slowly, for they were not exactly sure of their directions, and it was early in the morning before they were able to make out water ahead of them.

"Probably the Mediterranean," said Henri in answer to Billy's question. "We're a little too far north. Make it south by east."

Billy obeyed, and the aeroplane swung about.

"What do you know about the Suez Canal, Henri?" asked Billy.

"Well, not much. It connects the Mediterranean and the Red Seas, thus dividing Egypt from Syria, which is a portion of Asiatic Turkey. It was purchased from Egypt by England in the days of Queen Victoria. It was constructed at a tremendous cost. It is a little more than a hundred miles long and very narrow, not much more than a hundred feet, I believe. I remember reading that the purchase of

the canal caused considerable talk in England. There was much opposition to the purchase, and the canal was referred to as nothing but a 'Ditch in the Desert.' "

"You seem to know considerable about it," said Billy. "Where did you manage to gather all this information?"

"Books," replied Henri briefly.

"In that case I guess I'll have to do more reading in the future," said Billy.

"It wouldn't hurt you any," was Henri's rejoinder.

They reached Port Said without difficulty, and alighted in the aeroplane park almost in the center of the town. They were accosted by an officer as they climbed from the machine, and when they announced that they carried dispatches from General Brush were received with courtesy.

"General Bryant," said an officer, "is at the front with the troops. An attack by the Turks in force is believed imminent, and the General has advanced to meet them."

"How far?" demanded Billy briefly.

"Our lines extend perhaps twenty-five miles east of the canal."

"I guess we can find 'em," replied Billy. "All right, Henri, let's be on the move."

They sailed low and found the British line that had been thrown beyond the canal with little trou-

ble. There they were escorted to the quarters of General Bryant.

The general scanned the brief dispatch quickly, then turned to Billy and Henri.

"How long have you been in this business?" he demanded sharply.

"War business?" asked Billy innocently.

"No. Airship."

Billy considered.

"Well, I can't say exactly," he replied, "but it's been a long time."

"Run 'em all right, can you?"

"We reached here O. K., sir," replied Billy significantly.

"Don't mind a little danger?"

"Not if it's of the prudent sort, sir."

"Willing to help me a little bit?"

"Yes, sir."

"Good! I have word that a Turkish army is approaching and in force, as many as three whole army corps. The scout I sent out yesterday has not come back. Probably he won't. I want to know if my information is correct."

"We'll find out, sir," declared Henri.

"Good!" said the general again. "Go over to the mess tent and stir up the cook. Get something to eat, and then be on the move. Let me know as soon as you come back, day or night."

The lads saluted, and the general was gone.

"The general has the right idea about the cook," said Billy. "Might as well rustle him up, I guess. I'm hollow inside."

"I can stow away a little myself," agreed Henri. "Come ahead."

"Well, here we go," said Billy half an hour later, as the big aeroplane took to the sky. "Straight east, I suppose?"

"As good as any," agreed Henri, "and fly low so we can see where we are and what is going on below."

Billy nodded that he understood, and flying swiftly they proceeded, though close to the ground.

For an hour they flew—perhaps sixty miles—before they saw anything to make them slow up.

"Something ahead down below," called Henri.

Billy nodded, and the machine swooped down even lower.

"Camp," said Billy briefly.

"Right," agreed Henri, "and Turks."

"What'll we do?"

"Go up a bit and see if we can't see something when we are directly over them."

The plane answered its elevating lever instantly, and they went up with a rush. Here they proceeded along very slowly.

Far down below they could make out the outline of a great army camp, extending miles and miles in all directions.

"Looks like the general's information was correct," Billy remarked. "How many men in an army corps?"

"Forty thousand."

"And three times forty——" Billy counted. "I guess they are down there all right. I can't see that they are shy a man of that number."

"No; and Yusef's probably there, too, which will make one more."

"Glory be! I'd almost forgotten about him," exclaimed Billy. "I'd like to get hold of him for about two minutes."

"He'd probably wring your neck," replied Henri.

"When I said I'd like to get hold of him, I meant I'd like to have a cannon in the other hand," Billy explained.

"That's a little different," laughed Henri. "Let's go down a bit and see what's to be seen."

"And be potted up here?"

"Oh, well, we'll have to take a chance."

"Down we go then."

They glided slowly toward the earth, and as they looked over the great camp, Billy and Henri both realized that there was little doubt of the accuracy of General Bryant's information.

How long the Turks had been in their present position they had no means of determining. The camp was quiet, however, and there seemed little

indication that the host was preparing to advance.

"Wonder how long they have been here, and how long before they will advance?" muttered Billy to himself.

"Well," said Henri at length, "we've been here long enough, haven't we? Let's go back."

"Hold your horses," returned Billy. "I want to drop a little closer first."

"You'll get us shot full of holes."

"Oh, I guess not."

The machine was now within three hundred feet of the ground, and so far their presence, for some unaccountable reason, had not been discovered, although they were almost directly over the eastern front of the army.

But now, very suddenly, the Turkish camp came to life. The presence of the hostile aircraft had been noted, and a hail of bullets came through the air.

Billy didn't take time to talk. He sent the aeroplane up with a quick jerk of the elevating lever. Three thousand feet up, he straightened her out for a flight back toward the British lines.

"Close call, that," he shouted to Henri.

"Rather. I thought we were done for."

"They took me by surprise," Billy explained. "I was watching carefully, and I didn't see a move until those bullets began to whistle by."

They sped on.

Glancing over his shoulder, Henri suddenly cried out in alarm.

"What's up?" demanded Billy.

"Pursued," replied Henri briefly. "He's coming like the wind."

"We can go that way, too," was Billy's answer, and he threw the speed lever to the last notch. "How about it now?"

"He's still gaining."

Billy took a look for himself.

"So I see," he said quietly. "Get your gun out, and if he gets too close, take a shot at him."

Henri obeyed this command, and put himself in position for a shot with his revolver.

But the pursuing aeroplane never got close enough for him to fire. The reason was this.

The hostile aviator was armed with a rifle. Guiding his machine with one hand, now that he was within range, he brought his short-barreled gun to his shoulder and pulled the trigger.

"Crack!" came the sound from behind.

"Smash!" came the sound aboard the boys' aeroplane.

Henri uttered a cry of dismay, and blazed away futilely with his revolver, but even as he did so, the aeroplane faltered in its stride, and glided swiftly toward the earth.

"What's up now?" demanded Henri anxiously.

"We are," replied Billy quietly, "but we won't be long. That one shot has put our steering apparatus out of business. Down we go again!"

CHAPTER XI.

YUSEF AGAIN.

THE aeroplane came to earth with a slight shock and the boys climbed out. Then they turned their eyes upon the second craft, now almost overhead.

It also came to rest on the earth, though some distance away, and the aviator took a position behind it with rifle leveled. Billy and Henri dropped down behind their own machine.

"He's got us, with that rifle of his," remarked Billy. "Our automatics won't shoot that far."

"Well, he'll have to come closer to get us," replied Henri. "He can't pick us off through the aeroplane."

They remained silent for perhaps five minutes, and then a voice hailed them in German. Henri recognized the tones immediately.

"Yusef," he said briefly.

"That so?" queried Billy. "Ask him what he wants."

Henri raised his voice and did so.

"Surrender!" cried Yusef.

"Not much," was Henri's reply.

"You cannot escape," called Yusef. "Look behind you."

Henri did so, and uttered an exclamation of alarm that was echoed by Billy as he also glanced over his shoulder.

Approaching at a gallop came a troop of Turkish cavalry.

"Take your choice, old man," said Billy quietly. "Which shall it be, Yusef or the others?"

"Guess we had better call it Yusef," replied Henri. "You might say that we are old acquaintances."

"All right. Tell him about it."

Again Henri raised his voice and hailed Yusef in German.

"We surrender!" he called.

Yusef arose from behind his machine, and the boys left their own shelter and advanced toward him.

There was the semblance of a smile on Yusef's face as he accepted the revolvers the boys tendered him.

"So we meet again," he said to Henri in German. "It is well."

"What are you going to do with us?"

"Take you back to camp."

"And then what?"

"I'll leave that to the general."

Henri shrugged his shoulders and repeated the conversation to Billy.

Yusef now motioned them to climb into his aero-

plane and they obeyed. Yusef took his place a moment later, and they left the ground just as the Turkish cavalry swooped down on them.

There was a shout in Turkish from one of the horsemen and Yusef waved a hand at him.

The flight back to camp was made quickly, and almost before they knew it, the boys stood in the presence of the Turkish commander-in-chief. Here Billy did most all the talking, for it transpired that the general understood English.

The general ordered Yusef to guard them in his own quarters, and they followed the man from the tent.

As they walked along toward Yusef's quarters, an officer approached and engaged Yusef in conversation. They talked in Turkish, so Billy and Henri could not tell what was being said, although it was apparent there was bad feeling between them. Two other officers approached and joined in the conversation, and the argument became heated. Malevolent glances were turned upon the boys, and suddenly one of the Turks approached and laid his hand on Henri's shoulder.

Yusef sprang forward with a growl, and the others turned on him. Again an excited conversation ensued, though it was absolutely unintelligible to the two lads.

Suddenly Yusef's hand dropped to his sides and he made as though to draw a revolver. One of the

others, standing a trifle back, quickly produced his own revolver, and clubbing it, brought the butt down on Yusef's head with stunning force.

Yusef spun round on his heel twice, and then toppled over. For a moment the others looked at him, then took to their heels, apparently forgetting the presence of the boys.

The latter glanced after them, then bent over Yusef.

"What do you suppose that was for?" demanded Henri.

"You've got me. Shall we make a break for liberty?"

Henri glanced rapidly around. They were almost in the center of the great Turkish camp. He shook his head.

"No use," he replied significantly. "Let's see what we can do for Yusef."

Even as the lads bent over him again, the man moved. The blow, though stunning, had been a glancing one, and while it had raised a terrible lump on his head and had cut him a bit, Billy saw that it was not necessarily very serious.

Right behind them was a tent, and the canvas front swung open. There was no one inside.

"Lay hold of him and we'll drag him in out of the sun," said Billy.

Henri obeyed, and they soon had Yusef beneath the shelter of the tent.

Inside Billy found a well-filled canteen. He moistened his handkerchief and bathed Yusef's wounds, then poured a cooling draught down his throat. Yusef stirred, then suddenly sat up and looked around.

His eyes rested upon the two boys, but in them there was no sign of recognition.

"Hello!" he said. "What's up?"

Billy gazed at Henri with an expression that said, "I told you so."

Aloud he said:

"I knew he spoke English."

Yusef gazed at both of them in surprise.

"In camp," replied Billy briefly, "one of your fellow officers cracked you over the head with his gun."

"Camp?" repeated Yusef. "Fellow officers? What are you talking about? And who are you boys, anyhow?"

"Going to try another little bluff, are you?" said Henri.

Yusef got to his feet unsteadily. He approached the entrance to the tent and looked out. Then he started back in surprise.

"Tents!" he ejaculated. He turned to Billy and Henri. "Army camp?" he asked.

"Say!" exclaimed Billy. "What's the use of all this foolishness? You——"

"Wait a minute, Billy," cried Henri suddenly. "I know what's the matter."

"What is it?"

"Yusef hasn't come to himself yet. That tap over the head has shattered his memory, maybe. I have heard of such cases."

"By Jove!" ejaculated Billy. "Maybe you are right."

He answered Yusef's question.

"Yes, this is an army camp," he replied.

"Cuba, eh," said Yusef. It was not a question, just a statement of fact.

"Cuba no!" shouted Billy. "What would we be doing in Cuba? This is Asiatic Turkey."

"Turkey!" repeated Yusef, putting his hand to his head. "Turkey! You are joking with me."

"No, I'm not," said Billy, more slowly now. "This is Turkey, all right, and there are more than a hundred thousand men in this camp."

"British army, eh?" asked Yusef.

"Turks," replied Henri briefly.

"Well," said Yusef, after a pause, "what am I doing here?"

"You are a Turkish officer," replied Henri quietly, "and from what we know of you, have been doing some aeroplane scouting."

"What! Me an officer? Impossible."

"You seem to be, at any rate," said Billy. "And you are one of the most daring aviators I ever saw."

"Aviator? You mean I fly an airship?"

"Exactly."

"Impossible. I have often wanted to go up, but I never had the nerve."

"But I tell you, you are," declared Billy. "Didn't you pick us up in the middle of the desert?"

"Not to my knowledge," replied Yusef. "And are you Turkish officers, too?"

"Not much. We are just a couple of aviators, but we have been doing some scouting for the British."

"So England and Turkey are at war, eh? What for?"

"You mean you expect us to believe you didn't know there was a war?" demanded Billy incredulously.

Yusef inclined his head.

"I don't know anything about it," he replied simply.

"I believe he is telling the truth, Billy," declared Henri. "His memory is gone."

He turned to Yusef.

"What is your name?" he asked.

"Why, my name is—is—let me see—my name is —why, I can't think of it. What's the matter with me?"

"Is your name Yusef?" demanded Billy.

"Yusef? No. Why?"

"That's what you told us it was."

"Yusef," repeated the man. "No, that's not my name, and still it has a familiar sound."

"I should think it had," declared Billy. "You told us your name when you wouldn't speak a word of English."

"What did I speak?" exclaimed Yusef.

"Well, a little German," said Billy, "but mostly Turkish."

"Turkish! Great Scott, boy, I can't speak Turkish."

"But you did speak it," declared Billy vehemently.

"Let me talk to him a while, Billy?" said Henri.

"Sure, go ahead."

"Why did you think we are in Cuba?" Henri asked of Yusef.

"Why, because I didn't know the war was over. I was a lieutenant of infantry, you know."

"What army, and what war?" demanded Henri.

"United States army. Spanish-American war."

"That," said Billy, "was in the year 1898. This is 1915."

Yusef staggered back, clear across the tent.

"Impossible!" he exclaimed.

"It is true," said Billy briefly.

Yusef sat down and buried his face in his hands.

"I must think. I must think," he muttered over and over again.

CHAPTER XII.

BACK INTO EGYPT.

Billy and Henri withdrew to the far corner of the tent, leaving the mystified man to think in peace. For long minutes Yusef sat there, saying nothing, not even moving, his face still buried in his hands.

"Do you believe he is telling the truth?" asked Henri of his friend.

"I don't know. It seems impossible. I don't know what to think."

Plainly Yusef, for so we must still call him, could not refresh his memory. Directly he arose, and commenced to stride back and forth in the tent. At last he stopped and faced the boys.

"What you have told me must be true," he said quietly, "but I am unable to account for my presence here. Tell me something about this war."

Henri immediately plunged into an account of the great European war up to date, giving also a brief résumé of the events leading up to it. And as he progressed with his story, the amazement on Yusef's face became more and more pronounced. And at the conclusion he was utterly bewildered.

Hardly had Henri finished, when rapid footsteps

were heard approaching the tent. Henri turned to Yusef quickly.

"Don't forget you are a Turkish officer," he exclaimed.

"But I tell you I cannot speak Turkish," declared the man.

"Well, you'll have to frighten this fellow off then, or make him think you know what he is talking about if he comes in here."

Yusef stooped and picked up his hat, which lay on the floor. Then the three faced the entrance to the tent.

A Turkish officer—a lieutenant—strode in, approached Yusef and saluted. Then he broke into a torrent of words that were absolutely unintelligible to the two boys; and they saw also that Yusef seemed completely at sea.

However, he maintained his composure well, and the lieutenant, having finished, clicked his heels together, turned and left the tent.

Billy and Henri drew a breath of relief.

"Did you get him?" asked Billy.

"Did I what?" exclaimed Yusef.

"Get him. Understand what he was talking about?"

Yusef shook his head.

"I haven't the slightest idea," he replied quietly.

"Well, Henri, old top," said Billy, "what are we

going to do? We'll have to get out of here some way."

Henri thought rapidly. Then he said:

"I'll tell you. We'll walk out of here just like we owned the place, taking Yusef with us. We will not be challenged, for Yusef's position, whether he is a Turk or not, carries a certain amount of safety. We'll take one of the planes and make a break for the British lines."

"Good!" said Billy. "Suit you, Yusef?"

"Anything you boys may decide upon meets with my approval," nodded Yusef.

"All right then. The sooner we start the better."

With Yusef walking a few paces behind them they made their way from the tent, and turned in the direction where the boys knew the aircraft to be.

They reached this point without being challenged, and set to work pulling one of the larger craft into the clearing. Just as they had shoved it where they wanted it, a Turkish officer approached Yusef and asked a question.

Yusef was equal to the occasion. He bent a fierce scowl on the officer, and muttered unintelligible words. The officer drew back, saluted and was gone.

"Good for you, Yusef, old boy," exulted Billy. "You're all right. Now let's get away from here quick."

The boys motioned Yusef into the seat aft, and

he climbed in nervously, the boys could see. Henri leaped to the engine and Billy took his place at the wheel. The engine coughed loudly, Billy threw in the clutch, and away they went.

There was a startled exclamation from Yusef as they arose like a bird, and he clutched the side of his seat. Henri glanced back over his shoulder, and the man's face was very pale.

"Just sit tight and you'll be all right," Henri assured him.

Yusef gave a sickly smile, but he needed no urging to hang on. His hands gripped the seat until his knuckles stood out white.

As the machine laid itself out on a straightaway course, however, he lost some of his nervousness, and looked about with interest. He glanced down once, and thereafter kept his eyes straight ahead.

There was no pursuit and the aeroplane soon descended within the British lines. Accompanied by Yusef, the boys made their way immediately to the quarters of General Bryant.

The general took a step back at the sight of the third of the party, then smiled.

"Prisoner, eh?" he said.

"That is for you to decide, general," said Billy, and gave an account of their first meeting with Yusef and of the events which followed.

"What's his name?" asked General Bryant.

"He can't remember, sir. His Turkish name is Yusef."

"Yusef!" exclaimed the general in great surprise. "Yusef! Then he is a prisoner. You have indeed made an important capture."

"Then you know him, sir?"

"No, but I know of him. He is many-sided and has done more to stir up ill feeling among the Egyptians than could the Sultan himself. He is supposed to be an Algerian tribesman, but no one knows just who he is."

Yusef had stood silent all during this conversation, but now he spoke.

"If that is true, I know nothing of it, sir," he said quietly.

"That," said the general sharply, "is a lie." He turned to the two boys. "He has taken this means of gaining your confidence and getting into our lines, where he may be able to accomplish more mischief.

"But the fight back yonder, sir," protested Henri. "What of that, sir?"

"Part of the plot," replied the general briefly. "Orderly!"

He raised his voice and his orderly came into the tent. The general waved his arm toward Yusef.

"Summon a file of soldiers and see that this man is well guarded," he said shortly.

The orderly left the tent, returning in a few mo-

ments with half a dozen troopers. In spite of his requests for a hearing, Yusef was led away.

"Now your report, sirs," said General Bryant sharply.

The lads told him what they had learned.

"And you say there seems no indication they will take the offensive immediately?"

"There is no such indication, sir."

"Very good. Then I shall assume the offensive myself."

"But they outnumber you, sir, four to one."

"What of it?" demanded the general. "If one Englishman is not good for four Turks any day in the week, I'll become a hermit, sir. You may go. No—wait a moment," as they turned away; "this Yusef, can I trust you to turn him over to General Brush for me?"

"Yes, sir, if you command it."

"Very good."

Again he summoned his orderly.

"Bring the prisoner back here," he commanded.

"I am not at all convinced he is not telling the truth," declared Billy.

"Well, I am," replied the general. "There is not a doubt of it. I cannot afford to be troubled with him here, and he is too important to be given a chance to escape. Tie him up in your aeroplane, and make sure that he is turned over to General Brush. He'll know what to do with him."

"Very well, sir," Billy agreed.

Yusef now returned in the custody of the orderly and the file of soldiers.

"You are to go with us, Yusef," said Billy quietly.

Yusef bowed, but said nothing. The boys saluted the general and made their way to the aeroplane.

"We are commanded to turn you over to General Brush in Cairo," explained Billy, as they flew along. "You may be telling us the truth and you may not. We'll take no chances."

"You will be but doing your duty," replied Yusef quietly.

"If you are telling the truth, I shall be sorry. But how are we to know?"

"If all you have told me is true," said Yusef, "and I have no reason to doubt it, strange as it seems, you will be doing no more than is right. If it is true that I have been mixed up with the Turks, I am glad that I have come to the end of my rope. By birth, I am an Englishman."

"Then why did you mix up in the Spanish war?" demanded Billy.

"Because I was living in the United States, and was elected captain of a volunteer company. I served through the Cuban campaign as a lieutenant."

"By the way," said Billy dryly, "you don't happen

to remember dropping my friend and me on top of the Sphinx and leaving us there, do you?"

"No. Did I do that?"

"You did, and I promised myself that the next time we met I would have something to say about it. We stayed there for hours."

"I'm sorry," declared Yusef.

"So'm I," agreed Billy. "But, of course, if you didn't know what you were doing, it makes a difference. Just the same, I've got a notion to drop you up there for a few hours to see how you like it."

Yusef was forced to smile.

"I must have done lots of things I don't know anything about," he said.

"And don't you remember the massacre of white people you were planning?" asked Henri.

"Massacre!" exclaimed Yusef. "Did I go as far as that?"

"You were planning to, at any rate," replied Billy quietly.

High in the air as they were, Yusef again buried his face in his hands.

"What have I done! What have I done!" he cried. "Surely, it cannot be true. I can't have done all these things!"

Billy and Henri did not interrupt him and left him with his grief. Whether it was real or feigned neither, at that time, would have attempted to say.

There was no doubt that they had been impressed

with his story, but they had had such dealings with him as made them incredulous.

As Billy said:

"He may be telling the truth, and he may not be. Only time will tell."

CHAPTER XIII.

YUSEF RUNS AMUCK.

"Back again, eh?"

The speaker was General Brush, and Billy and Henri, with Yusef between them, stood in his quarters in Cairo.

"On deck, sir," replied Billy, giving the military salute.

"Why this return trip?" asked the general.

"We are ordered by General Bryant to turn this prisoner over to you, sir."

The general eyed the prisoner keenly.

"Who is he?" he demanded.

"Gentleman by the name of Yusef, sir," replied Billy, grinning.

"Oho! So you recaptured him, eh?"

"Well, he's here," replied Billy, "but I can't say we recaptured him."

"How is that?" demanded the general, and added: "Explain."

Billy did so, as briefly as possible. General Brush eyed Yusef skeptically during the recital, and when Billy had concluded he said:

"General Bryant is undoubtedly right. It is a trick."

"I believe the man is telling the truth, sir," spoke Henri. "Surely you have heard of such cases before?"

"Yes," said the general grimly, "I have, but I don't believe they happened so opportunely. If we believed him and gave him the freedom of our lines, he would be able to furnish his friends with information of the utmost importance. No, I believe the scheme was all mapped out. We can afford to take no chances."

Billy was struck with a sudden idea.

"There was a man who seemed to recognize him when we first came to Cairo, sir. Perhaps he can throw some light on the subject."

"So?" inquired General Brush. "Who is he?"

"I don't know his name," replied Billy, "but Colonel Strong would remember."

"We'll have the colonel in," said the general.

He called his orderly.

"My compliments to Colonel Strong and tell him I desire his presence here at once," said the general.

The orderly saluted and departed.

There was no further conversation until Colonel Strong entered the room and came to attention.

"You sent for me, sir?" he asked.

"Yes. Do you recognize this prisoner?"

The colonel eyed Yusef carefully.

"By my soul!" he exclaimed at length. "It's Yusef."

"Exactly. Now do you remember that a certain officer appeared to recognize him when he landed from the aeroplane day before yesterday?"

"Yes, sir. It was Captain Richardson, but he later said he was mistaken."

"Have Captain Richardson summoned here immediately," General Brush commanded his orderly.

Again the orderly departed, and while they awaited the arrival of Captain Richardson, General Brush explained the situation to Colonel Strong. It was plain to Billy and Henri that the story made the same impression upon Colonel Strong it had on the general.

Fifteen minutes later Captain Richardson arrived and saluted his superior officers.

All this time Yusef had stood perfectly quiet, uttering no word. He stood erect between Billy and Henri, a slight smile lighting up his features.

But as his eyes fell upon Captain Richardson, as that officer entered the room, his eyes lighted up and he took a step forward. Then he drew back again.

And even as he did so Billy noticed a peculiar expression steal over his face—an expression of amazement, followed almost immediately by one of fear. He seemed to be trying to speak, but he uttered only a gurgling sound. Then the expression of fear gave way to one of cunning.

"Captain Richardson," it was General Brush who spoke, "do you recognize this prisoner?"

He waved a hand toward Yusef.

The captain took a quick step forward, uttered an exclamation of delight, and once more extended his hand to Yusef.

"Charley!" he cried.

There was no sign of recognition on Yusef's face. He looked at the young captain, a peculiar smile on his face. He made no effort to take the hand extended to him. Then he broke into speech.

Billy and Henri drew back in surprise at the unintelligible words that came pouring forth. They could not understand a word he said.

General Brush smiled.

"I thought you told me he spoke no Turkish," he said to Billy.

"He couldn't two hours ago, sir. I can vouch for that. Are you sure he is speaking Turkish now?"

"Perfectly. I'll ask him a question."

"What's your name?" he asked sharply in Turkish.

"Yusef," came the prompt response.

"Attached to the Turkish army?"

"Yes."

"How did you get to Cairo?"

"I—I don't know. The last I seem to remember I was with the Turkish troops."

General Brush translated this conversation to the boys.

"You see he has taken up his mask again," he said quietly.

"Ask him if he knows us, sir," requested Billy.

The general put the question, and Yusef nodded.

"Yes. I picked them up in the desert. They escaped, but later I recaptured them as they were fleeing from the Turkish army across the canal."

Again the General translated for the benefit of the two boys.

"Ask him if he remembers accompanying us here, sir," requested Henri.

General Brush did so, and Yusef shook his head negatively.

General Brush now turned again to Captain Richardson.

"Do you recognize this prisoner, sir?" he asked again.

"I thought I did, sir. But surely I must be mistaken."

"And for whom did you mistake him?"

"My brother Charley, sir, who disappeared from home a good many years ago. We have given him up for dead."

"Are you sure this is not the same man?"

Captain Richardson scrutinized Yusef closely.

"He looks like him, sir, but it cannot be. He would know me at once, sir."

"Unless he figured it would be to his advantage not to do so," returned General Brush grimly.

Billy stepped forward and addressed the officers.

"The trouble," he said quietly, "is that his memory has gone again, sir."

"Ho! Ho! Ho! Ho!" laughed General Brush. "I must give him credit. He certainly has fooled you boys. It's fortunate I am too old a bird to be caught like that."

He turned once more to Captain Richardson.

"I'll turn your brother's twin over to you for safe keeping, captain," he said. "See that he is well guarded."

The captain saluted, and approached Yusef, one hand extended to grasp him by the arm.

For a brief moment all in the room had been off their guard, when, evidently realizing what was about to happen, Yusef took advantage of the brief moment to make a dash for liberty.

Only Billy and Henri stood between him and the door. Captain Richardson was at his left, as were General Brush and Colonel Strong.

Yusef hurled himself forward in a cat-like spring, and Billy and Henri were borne to the floor by the suddenness of it. Yusef's great fist grazed Billy's head, as he aimed a terrible blow at him. A quick dodge was all that saved the lad.

As the general and his officers sprang after him with a shout, Yusef drew himself to his feet and sprang through the door. In doing this he leaped over Henri's prostrate form, and the latter reached

up quickly and seized him by the left foot with both hands.

Yusef went to the floor in a sprawling heap. He shook himself free of the boy's grip in an instant, however, and jumped to his feet with a roar of wrath. He whirled upon the officers who would have laid hold of him.

Before they had time to bring their drawn revolvers to bear, the big man was upon them, and his great arms flew about swifter than the eye could follow.

Colonel Strong was the first to fall before these terrific blows, and as he toppled over, he bumped against the general, who even at that moment had succeeded in bringing his revolver to bear.

This impact spoiled the general's aim, and the bullet flew wild.

Before the officer could pull the trigger again, Yusef was upon him and, picking him up in his powerful arms, he dashed him full at Captain Richardson, who had been maneuvering so as to get a shot at Yusef without danger of hitting the general.

The general and Captain Richardson went down in a heap.

At this moment a newcomer, attracted from the adjoining room by the sounds of confusion, took a hand in the fray. This was General Brush's orderly.

Yusef dropped quickly to the floor as the orderly pulled the trigger of his revolver, and before he

could fire a second time, the big man had launched himself across the floor.

The orderly stepped back too late. The powerful arms caught him around the knees, and he toppled over, his head striking the floor with a thud. He lay still.

All this had happened in the smallest fraction of the time it takes to tell it, and Billy and Henri were just getting to their feet as Yusef again turned toward the door.

They had no time to draw their own weapons, so, as Yusef strode toward them, as of a single mind they launched themselves at his legs—and each caught one.

Yusef stopped a moment. He did not fall. Reaching down he picked Henri up as though he had been a child and broke his grasp. Then he shoved him violently across the room.

Billy clung tighter, and, with a muttered imprecation, Yusef shook him free with a kick. Neither lad was badly hurt, although the feelings of both were badly ruffled by the treatment they had received. They picked themselves up just as Yusef went out the door.

"After him!" cried Billy.

But when they stepped out the door Yusef had disappeared!

CHAPTER XIV.

ON THE TRAIL.

"WHERE did he go?" cried Henri.

"Must have stepped into a pair of seven-league boots, I guess," replied Billy quietly.

They gazed about for some moments, but seeing no signs of the fugitive, returned to the general's quarters.

General Brush, Colonel Strong and Captain Richardson were picking themselves up as the boys came in. Billy was forced to smile grimly at the sight the room presented, and at the disconsolate countenances of the officers.

"Yusef made a pretty thorough job," he whispered, nudging Henri.

Henri also smiled, and General Brush caught the amusement in his face.

"This is no time for levity, young man," he said sternly. "Which way did the villain go?"

"He went out the door," replied Henri calmly, "and then—out of sight. That's all I know about it."

"You mean he disappeared?"

"As if by magic," agreed Billy.

"But why didn't you give chase? What did you let him get away for?" exploded the general.

"If you three couldn't stop him, I don't see where we had much chance," declared Henri.

General Brush was very angry. He had been severely manhandled, and he didn't like it. That much was plain. He strode up and down the room with rapid strides, and with each stride his anger increased. Suddenly he whirled upon the two other officers.

"What are you standing there for?" he demanded. "Why don't you get out after him? Captain Richardson! Take a squadron of troops and scour the city. Search every house if necessary. Colonel Strong! Draw a cordon around the town. This man must not escape. He is dangerous!"

The two officers departed hurriedly, evidently glad to get out of the presence of their superior.

General Brush seemed to ignore the presence of Billy and Henri. He continued to pace up and down the room, and gradually his anger cooled. Directly he stopped before the two lads, and faced them, his hands behind his back.

"Well," he said, "what are you going to do, eh?"

"Whatever you say, sir," replied Henri quietly.

The general considered.

"You bring that man back to me, and you can have my job if you want it," he said grimly.

"Thanks," replied Billy with a smile. "We

couldn't hold your job, sir; but we'll have a look for Mr. Yusef, at all events."

"I tell you he is a dangerous man," declared the general. "Couldn't talk Turkish, eh? Bosh! Memory came back to him suddenly, eh? More bosh! Didn't know his own brother. All bosh! Nothing but bosh!"

The general raised his voice. He was again growing excited. His feelings had been greatly ruffled.

Henri nudged Billy.

"Let's get out of here," he whispered.

"Well, we'll get on the trail, sir," said Billy.

The general ceased his talk, and nodded shortly. The two lads saluted and made their way outside.

"Whew!" breathed Billy. "He can go some when he gets started, can't he?"

"Meaning?" queried Henri.

"General Brush. My, but he was mad. Well, Yusef did handle him pretty roughly, and no mistake."

"Right you are; which is proof that Yusef can go some too when he gets started."

"He's a tough customer, all right," agreed Billy.

"Also a slippery one," declared Henri. "That's twice he has given us the slip. And say! that was a pretty yarn he cooked up for us, now wasn't it?"

"Rather," replied Billy dryly. "It must have required some thought. Talk about Ananias! Yusef's got him backed off the boards!"

"And he was so convincing," said Henri.

"He pulled the wool over our eyes, and that's a fact. If we get him again we'll take a little more pains to hang on to him."

"Fat chance we have of finding him," remarked Henri. "It'll be like looking for a needle in a haystack. This is a pretty good sized village, you know."

"Tell you what," exclaimed Billy. "We'll hunt up Sergeant Scott. He may be able to give us a hint as to how to go about this sleuthing business."

"It won't do any harm, that's sure," agreed Henri.

But the finding of Sergeant Scott was no easy matter. He had moved his quarters, and it was a good two hours before the boys finally ran him to earth.

They put the situation before him in as few words as possible.

"I'll tell you," said the sergeant. "There is a little café a couple of blocks from here. All true sons of the Prophet gather there every evening to tell each other what they are going to do to us when the time comes. I understand a little Turkish. We'll drop in there and see if we can't find out something."

It was now well along in the afternoon, and the sergeant suggested something to eat. Both lads fell in with this plan, for they were very hungry.

It was almost eight o'clock when Sergeant Scott led the way into the little café, passed down a long row of tables and sat down at the far end of the room, where they could have a good view of the door without being too much in evidence themselves.

"Isn't it dangerous for us to be here?" asked Billy.

"Not particularly," replied the sergeant. "As long as you keep your eyes peeled and your backs to the wall, you are all right. But don't let one of these fellows get behind you. The Egyptian loves a British soldier about as well as he does a snake."

"But I thought——" Billy began.

"You thought wrong," interrupted Sergeant Scott. "Oh, I know what you are going to say, and it all sounds very well back in England. Out here you're up against the real thing and there's a whole lot of difference. One of these fellows would stick a knife into you with exactly the same pleasure as he would go into dinner. Now look at that fellow"—the sergeant pointed to a large man, with a green turban and long, flowing sash, who entered the café at that moment—"he's big enough to lick several of us in a stand-up fight, but the chances are he'd wait until he was able to sneak round behind you."

Billy and Henri glanced curiously at the big man. There was something familiar about the figure, which advanced into the room with long strides.

His face was almost covered, he had pulled his headpiece low, but the easy swing of the great shoulders and the long strides could belong to but one man.

Henri uttered an exclamation of amazement, and would have jumped to his feet, but Billy's hand held him down.

"Quiet, old scout!" he warned in a low voice.

Henri sank back in his seat.

"Did you recognize him?" he demanded.

Billy nodded.

"Yusef," he agreed.

"Here," said Sergeant Scott, who had eyed them in undisguised surprise, "what's all this about?"

"That's our man," said Billy in a low voice, inclining his head toward a table where Yusef had just seated himself.

"Sure?" whispered the sergeant.

"Yes. He's had a change of feathers, and he's keeping his face pretty well covered; but he's the man."

"And he can't see you from there," declared the sergeant.

"We've got to get him," declared Henri. "Got your gun, Billy?"

"All ready," replied Billy quietly.

"Now you children listen to me," said the sergeant. "You haven't a chance in the world of nailing this bird in here. He's got seventeen kinds of friends sitting around here, all ready to take a hand

should we get frisky. He's perfectly safe here and he knows it."

"Then what are we going to do?" demanded Billy.

"Just sit tight until he goes out," was the sergeant's reply. "Then we'll trail along after him."

"I guess that's good advice," said Henri.

"You bet it's good advice," declared Sergeant Scott. "That's the only kind of advice I pass out."

"But he is liable to lose himself outside before we can get after him," protested Billy.

"If he does he'll have to travel some," said the sergeant dryly. "Now you boys keep your faces turned away from him. I'll do all the looking. He doesn't know me from Adam."

They sat quietly for more than an hour, Sergeant Scott meanwhile consuming several cooling drinks.

"Have to do something to kill the time," he explained. "Waiters might get anxious if we didn't buy something."

"As long as we don't have to join in it's all right," said Billy.

"Yes," Henri agreed. "I wouldn't want to kill time that way."

"Perfectly right, boys, perfectly right," declared the sergeant seriously. "Never start and you won't have to stop. Now when—Hello!"

He broke off with an exclamation.

"Your friend's gathering his robes to be on the

way," said the sergeant. "Wait till he gets to the door and we'll move upon his rear."

The two lads asked no questions. A few moments later Sergeant Scott arose, and the boys followed suit.

"Keep behind me and out of sight," whispered the sergeant. "He might turn around and spot you. He won't pay any attention to me."

The boys did as commanded and followed Sergeant Scott down the row of tables and out the door. At the door the sergeant stopped to light his pipe. Then he moved on again, the boys following as before.

"He just slid around that corner," spoke the sergeant. "He saw me, but I don't believe he suspected anything. That's the beauty of being a smoking man. We'll slide around the corner after him now."

The sergeant pressed forward quickly, and as he swung around the corner he caught sight of the quarry disappearing down another side street. He quickened his steps and, coming to the mouth of the street, stooped and raised a warning hand.

"Here's where I leave you, boys," he said. "Mr. Yusef's going for a joy ride in the sky!"

CHAPTER XV.

AN AIR CHASE.

"Had we better tackle him now, sergeant?" asked Henri.

"Whenever you say," was the reply.

"There is a whole flock of planes there," said Billy. "Looks like the guard had gone to sleep, too."

"Right," agreed Henri, "but if we don't hurry he'll be in the air before we can reach him."

"Here we go, then," cried Billy, and he darted down the street.

Henri and Sergeant Scott followed close at his heels.

But they had already delayed too long. Billy was the first to realize this and dashed forward with a shout, thinking to make Yusef delay his flight.

But Yusef was too cool-headed for that. It now appeared that he had a companion, and as he ran Billy realized what had happened. Yusef's companion had cut out the machine and prepared it for flight, while Yusef was in the café.

All that was necessary was for the men to climb in, and this they did as Billy dashed up. The ma-

chine sped over the ground, and then left the earth with a leap.

Billy uttered a cry of dismay, but Henri brought him back to himself.

"After him!" he cried.

With the assistance of Sergeant Scott they dragged out a second machine and jumped to their places.

"Wish I could go with you, boys," exclaimed the sergeant, as Henri bent over the engine.

"We'll get our friend Yusef if we have to chase him around the world," declared Billy through set teeth. "He made fools of us once and we are bound to even up the score!"

"Good luck to you, and be careful!" cried the sergeant as the biplane took to the air.

Henri waved a hand in reply.

"Which way did he go, Billy?" he asked.

"Same way we're going, east," was the reply.

The machine sped on in pursuit of its quarry.

Billy threw the speed lever over to the limit, and they dashed through the air like the wind. Ahead of them in the uncertain light — the moon shone brightly—they could dimly make out the form of the fugitive air craft.

But in spite of all the nursing Billy could do, they could not gain a yard. Neither, however, could the pursued.

"If they alight we'll go down on top of them if

it's right in the middle of the Turkish camp," declared Billy.

Now the first plane suddenly swerved and headed south. Billy also changed his course. An hour later the first plane again made a sudden turn, and headed west. Billy had anticipated this, however, and, shooting diagonally across the sky, gained a trifle, which enabled him to see the other plane more clearly.

They were dashing back in the direction from which they had come, only further to the south.

"We're headed for the desert!" cried Henri.

"I hope we stay over it this time," said Billy.

The pursuit continued.

Several times Yusef changed his course, but Billy hung on tenaciously.

"Trying to lose us in the darkness!" exclaimed Henri.

"That's what he's trying to do, all right," agreed Billy. "He'll have to do better than that."

Our Young Aeroplane Scouts had not gained their reputations as daring aviators without reason.

The chase continued all during the night, and the first dawn of morning found them speeding westward in the same relative positions.

Now Yusef changed his course again, and headed north. He did not turn abruptly, but in a wide, sweeping circle, that did not permit the pursuers to gain on him. In the same manner, an hour later,

he swung to the east again, so that once more they were heading toward Cairo.

They had come many miles, as Billy was able to determine by a glance at the pedometer.

"I don't think this will continue much longer," Billy shouted, so as to make himself heard. "The old fellow's getting tired. He'll land before long."

But it seemed that Billy was mistaken, for Yusef, after gliding a thousand feet nearer the earth, continued his eastward course.

"What's that ahead?" called Henri suddenly.

In the distance, below them, could be made out a blur, and Billy saw smoke rising.

"Looks like Cairo," he replied.

And so it was. The all-night chase had brought them back almost to the starting point.

Now Yusef swerved slightly southward so as to avoid passing over the city. Billy and Henri were close on his trail.

They flashed by the city several miles to the south, and continued straight to the distant boundary of Asia.

Yusef swerved a degree northward and dropped to a lower level.

"There is the ditch!" cried Henri suddenly, as they flashed over a narrow strip of water.

He was right. They had passed across the Suez canal and were once more above Asiatic Turkey.

A few moments later, far below, they could make

out the first British lines, and even from that height, they could see the troops were on the move, advancing.

"Battle coming pretty soon," shouted Henri.

"Not today, unless the Turks also are advancing," replied Billy.

Clear over the British host they flew, the first aeroplane drawing a shot from below. Yusef immediately sent his plane higher again, and so did Billy.

Half an hour later the boys could make out in the far distance the first sign of Turkish troops.

"Looks like Yusef would win," shouted Henri.

Billy made no reply, but gritted his teeth.

Then, just as it seemed that Yusef must reach a place of safety, something happened.

Even as far behind as they were, the boys heard a slight explosion, and Yusef's plane dropped suddenly. The master hand on the wheel, however, steadied the craft, and it glided toward the earth slowly.

"Hurrah!" shouted Billy. "We'll get him yet!"

He swooped down after the disabled airship.

Henri echoed this shout, and made sure that his revolver was in working order. He had no mind to use it unless it was absolutely necessary; but he realized that Yusef would shoot without compunction, and he had no desire to be shot.

Billy's craft landed some distance from the spot

where Yusef's machine had grounded, and the two boys leaped out quickly.

Yusef and his companion were already on the ground, and were running toward the boys as fast as their legs would carry them over the ground.

"How's your gun, old top?" asked Billy.

"Ready to work," replied Henri briefly.

"Good! There is no use standing up here in the open. We'll make breastworks of our plane. Scoot around behind."

Henri followed Billy's injunction, and lay down on the ground, his head appearing just above the body of the machine. Billy fell into place beside him.

"I'm not the best shot in the world," declared Billy, "and I don't want to kill anyone. Let 'em get close enough and maybe we can plunk 'em in the arm."

"Right you are, general," replied Henri.

Apparently unmindful of the danger threatening them, Yusef and his companion came on at a run.

"We'll give 'em a chance," said Billy. "Use your German and tell 'em to halt."

Henri did so, but without result. Apparently Yusef did not even hear the command, for he came straight on.

His revolver cracked and a bullet struck the machine in front of Billy. The latter shifted his position a trifle.

"Good thing we have a barricade," he muttered.

The revolver of Yusef's companion spoke, and another bullet struck close.

"Not yet!" cried Billy, as Henri seemed on the verge of firing.

Henri waited.

And now the two attackers were a scant twenty yards away.

"I guess we can plunk 'em from this distance," muttered Billy. "Let her go, Henri!"

The two revolvers spoke as one.

"Missed!" cried Billy, in some alarm.

And so it seemed, for the approaching figures did not even pause in their stride.

"Again!" cried Billy.

Yusef's companion dropped his revolver, grabbed his right elbow with his left hand, and sat down on the ground abruptly.

Henri let out a cheer.

"One down!" he called.

"One cigar!" said Billy briefly.

His revolver spoke again. This time he had taken careful aim, and he had little doubt as to the result of the shot.

"Crack!"

Down went Yusef on the sand, his revolver flying fully twenty feet away.

"Come on!" cried Billy.

He was around the plane in a moment and dash-

ing toward the fallen Yusef. Henri followed close behind.

Yusef scrambled to his feet as Billy came toward him, and made a dash for his fallen revolver. So did Billy, and Billy won.

He put his foot on Yusef's weapon, and covered Yusef with his own.

"Hands up!" he commanded suddenly.

Whether this was one of Yusef's English-speaking moments or not Billy didn't know. But if Yusef didn't understand the command, he at least understood the significance of the boy's words. His hands went high in the air.

"Watch the other one!" cried Billy to Henri. Then he spoke to Yusef.

"This," he said, "is in payment for marooning us on top of the Sphinx!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HANDS OF THE TURKS.

"Now, Mr. Yusef," said Billy calmly, flourishing his revolver in a gesture, "you'll hop into our wagon and we'll take you back where you belong. The general says you should not be running around loose and he seems to know what he is talking about."

Yusef hesitated, and Billy spoke again:

"If you don't hustle I may deem it necessary to brush your hair with the butt of this gun and maybe I can refresh your convenient memory."

He took a step forward and Yusef hesitated no longer. He turned quickly toward the aeroplane and, under the cover of Billy's revolver, took his seat aft. Billy motioned Henri to take his place, and then climbed in himself and grasped the wheel. Yusef's companion was left nursing his elbow, to get help the best way he could.

As the machine sped through the air, Henri addressed their prisoner in English. Yusef shook his head, indicating that he did not understand. The boy tried him in German.

"No English today, eh?" he questioned.

"I have told you I do not speak English," replied Yusef calmly.

"I don't suppose you remember that yesterday you denied you spoke Turkish?"

Yusef shook his head.

"I have never denied it," he made answer.

"Oh, all right, if you are going to stick to it," said Henri and turned his eyes ahead, leaving Yusef to meditate in silence.

Under Billy's guiding hand the aeroplane was making rapid progress toward the coast of Egypt. They passed over the advancing British troops, and flew low over the Suez Canal, which they could dimly make out below them.

They had not taken the trouble to bind Yusef, believing that he would be perfectly safe while in the air. And this fact proved their undoing.

Henri suddenly felt his revolver leap from his pocket. Yusef, reaching over quietly, had seized it quickly. Henri grabbed at it, but he was too late. As the boy turned in his seat he looked squarely into the mouth of the weapon.

"Hands up!" cried Yusef in German.

Henri reached for the sky.

Billy, with eyes straight ahead, had not perceived this new trouble, and the first he knew of it was when Henri said quietly:

"He's got my gun, Billy."

Billy, still holding the wheel in a firm grasp, glanced over his shoulder, and as he did so the gun

in Yusef's hand shifted from Henri till it covered him.

"Tell him to turn," said Yusef quietly to Henri in German.

Henri repeated the command.

Billy hesitated, but for a moment only. Then he brought the head of the machine about in a wide circle, speaking to Henri as he did so.

"He wouldn't shoot me," he said, "for if he did we should all be killed. But he might take a shot at you if I didn't obey."

Henri nodded understandingly.

"He holds the whip hand," he agreed.

"I suppose he wants to go back to the Turkish camp. Ask him."

Henri did so, and Yusef nodded in the affirmative.

"Well, we'll have to do it," decided Billy. "He's got us, and we know it. But what fools we were not to tie him up."

Again they passed over the Suez Canal, and above the rapidly advancing British troops, and again the moving Turkish army came into sight. As they drew near it, flying low, several flashes of fire came from the ground, followed by as many low reports.

The Turks were firing at the aeroplane.

"What shall we do?" demanded Henri of Yusef.

"Go down here," was the reply.

Henri repeated these instructions to Billy, and the

machine sank rapidly toward the earth, where it came to rest a few minutes later, in the very midst of the Turkish host.

Yusef hastily jumped out and, still covering the lads with his newly acquired revolver, motioned them out also. They obeyed without a word.

At this moment a Turkish officer approached, and Yusef turned to greet him. Heated words followed, and then the officer, turning, summoned a subordinate and a squad of soldiers. These surrounded Yusef and the two boys, and they were led toward the rear of the army.

"Great Scott! What have they pinched Yusef for?" exclaimed Billy.

"How do I know?" demanded Henri. "Wait a minute, though. By Jove, I have it. They have discovered how we escaped before, and they have accused Yusef of having a hand in it."

"Well, he had a hand in it, all right," replied Billy, "and according to General Brush, the Turkish officers must have known it."

"Then what have they nabbed him for?"

"That's what I'd like to know. You don't suppose we have misjudged him, do you?"

"No chance," returned Henri briefly.

An hour later, with Yusef still by their side, they found themselves facing the Turkish commanding officer and his entire staff. One of the officers, who Billy and Henri recognized as one of the men with

whom Yusef had had an encounter while protecting them, arose, and, pointing his finger at their captor, broke into a torrent of words.

Yusef listened quietly, and when the man had concluded, he stepped forward and replied warmly. Then the argument became heated, as others took a hand. Yusef grew excited, and the boys saw that he was angry.

Suddenly he stepped forward toward the man who had first accused him. He extended an arm and, before the other could step back, he had seized the man's nose between his thumb and forefinger and twisted it sharply.

There was a cry of anguish from the Turkish officer, and when Yusef released his hold, the man stepped back and drew his sword. But other officers rushed between them, and kept them apart.

"Did you see that?" cried Billy, "and right in front of the whole gang, too. Wow! I'll bet that other fellow is mad."

Henri nodded his agreement.

"I don't know what it's all about, and I don't know who is right," continued Billy, "but in this matter I am for Yusef—strong."

"Same here," declared Henri.

The two lads were suddenly thrust forward into the center of the officers by their guards. The Turkish general addressed them in Turkish and then, when they failed to answer, in English.

"How did you escape from here two days ago?" he asked.

"Airship," replied Billy briefly.

"Did you take this man with you?" indicating Yusef.

"Yes."

"Why?"

"Why, because he said he was an Englishman, and was through playing Turk," replied Billy.

The remark occasioned considerable comment among the Turkish officers. They talked excitedly and gesticulated violently.

"It is well," said the general to Billy. Then he turned to an officer and waved his arm in the direction of Yusef and the two boys.

"Take them away," were his words, though Billy and Henri did not know what he said.

A guard surrounded the three and they were led further toward the rear of the Turkish army. Here, after fifteen minutes' walk, they were thrust into a large tent, and several soldiers mounted guard over them outside.

Yusef turned to Henri with an angry gleam in his eye.

"This is your doing," he cried in German. "What did you tell the general?"

"I didn't tell him anything," replied Henri. "Billy did all the talking."

"What did he say?"

"Well, he told him you accompanied us to the British lines because you were tired of playing Turk."

"But it's not true," shouted Yusef.

"It is true," returned Henri quietly. "You told us with your own lips that you were an Englishman. You told us the last you remembered was the year 1898, the year of the Spanish-American war, at which time, you said, you were with the United States army in Cuba."

Yusef gazed at the boy in amazement.

"What are you telling me?" he demanded. "Surely you don't expect me to believe all that?"

Henri shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't care whether you believe it or not," he replied. "That's what you told us. That's all I know about it."

"But I tell you I never spoke English," declared Yusef.

"Well, you did. I heard you."

Yusef threw up his hand with a gesture of dismay. Then he turned around and went to the far end of the tent, where he squatted on his haunches and gave himself up to unhappy reflections, leaving the boys to themselves.

"Well, old top, they've got us again," said Billy, trying to appear cheerful. "Now what are they going to do with us?"

"Search me," replied Henri, with a shrug of his shoulders.

"And what was Yusef jabbering about just now?" demanded Billy.

Henri told him.

"The big four-flusher!" exclaimed Billy. "What's he think we are, anyhow? He's a deep one, and no mistake."

"That's the way it strikes me. But what's the answer? What does he expect to gain by fooling the Turks also?"

"I don't know—hold on though. Let's see if we can't figure this thing out. Do you remember that the first time we met him, when we offered him our services, he told us he was in the business for the cash?"

"Yes, he did say that," replied Henri. "What of it?"

"Hold your horses a minute. Now the question is, who would pay him the most for any important information he might be able to obtain?"

"I don't know about that," replied Henri, at last perceiving the drift of his chum's words.

"Or better still," continued Billy, "if he could ingratiate himself with both Turks and British, couldn't he play both ends, eh?"

"By Jove! That's it!" declared Henri. "That's just what he's trying to do."

"I believe we have hit it. He would furnish the

Turks with information of British movements, and the British with information of the Turkish movements. I'm willing to bet a little apple that was his idea. Oh yes, he was after the money, all right."

"But," said Henri, "he has slipped up. Instead, he's in bad with both sides."

"He's a pretty shrewd customer," declared Billy. "You mark me, he'll pull the wool over the eyes of these Turks yet."

"I wish him luck," was Henri's only comment.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE ROUT OF THE TURKISH ARMY.

The British advance guard had now come into contact with the first Turkish troops—thrown out in a thin skirmish line—and after a brief encounter the latter drew off.

General Bryant did not follow up this slight success, however. Realizing that the enemy outnumbered him four to one, he called a halt at the moment of first contact and drew up his troops in battle formation.

The bulk of the English troops were in the center, while the natives made up the two wings, with a scattering of English at the furthest extremity of each. General Bryant had taken this latter precaution that there might be no chance of mutiny among the Egyptians; for while he anticipated no trouble with them, some rumors of a desertion by the native troops had gained credence.

These native Egyptian troops, for years under the command of British officers, comprised the main part of the British fighting force. They had proved their worth and justified their training upon more than one occasion, but still General Bryant did not trust them fully.

From the first advance of the Turks against the Suez Canal, more than a month before, these Egyptians had gone into each skirmish and battle with great vigor, and had repeatedly driven the Mohammedans back. With the Egyptian troops was also a sprinkling of Indians, hurried from India as reinforcements when the first danger of a Turkish advance threatened. Upon these latter troops General Bryant put great dependence.

A month or more previous the Turks had advanced closer to the canal, but had been driven back by the great guns of the British warships acting in conjunction with the land forces.

Now that General Bryant had advanced so far from his base to give battle to the approaching horde of Turks, his first action, after calling a halt, was to throw out a line of skirmishers. Then he awaited the Turkish advance, for he had no mind to take the offensive himself unless the success of such a move seemed assured.

As the Turkish skirmish line fell back upon its support, firing as it retreated, the Turkish commander-in-chief, Ashard Pasha, threw forth several squadrons of Turkish cavalry, to stem a possible advance of the British forces. In the wake of these he sent heavy infantry supports, and immediately wheeled his big guns into position.

General Bryant, mounted on a superb Arabian horse, perceived through his field glasses the ad-

vance of the Turkish horsemen. He turned to a member of his staff with an order and the latter dashed away.

A moment later a squadron of British cavalry sallied forth to meet the Turkish troops.

With a wild yell the Turks charged the few British, and the two forces met with a shock, well in advance of both armies. Men reeled and tumbled from the saddles as they came together, and swords and sabres flashed in air.

The fighting was at such close quarters as practically to preclude the use of rifles, but revolvers cracked sharply all along the line.

The Turks charged magnificently, but the British troops stood like a rock and the Turks recoiled.

Then the British assumed the offensive, and dashed in among the crowd of dark-skinned faces with a shout of triumph.

The Turks, superb horsemen and fighters though they were, were no match for the British in this hand-to-hand fighting, and after a futile attempt to stay the Britons, retreated. Outfought and outgeneraled, they drew off hastily.

The British would have pursued them farther, but a member of General Bryant's staff approached and stayed them. The British commander was not yet ready for a general advance, and he did not wish to sacrifice lives needlessly.

The British cavalry withdrew within their supports.

The British field artillery had been wheeled rapidly into position, and now began to hurl shells into the enemy. The marksmanship of the gunners was superb and wrought terrible execution among the Turkish troops.

Now the Turkish commander gave the order for a general advance and the horde of Mohammedans came forward all along their entire front—the line extending several miles; and as they advanced the British field batteries in all portions of the field opened upon them.

The roar of the artillery was deafening. Shot and shell shrieked through the air and went screaming over the heads of the combatants, or plowed in among the solid masses of men.

The Turkish infantry, supported by field artillery, came forward at a run. In spite of the great gaps cut in their lines by the big British guns, they stood to their work and advanced coolly in the face of the terrible and deadly fire.

Right up to the mouths of the guns in the center of the most advanced British battery they advanced, and then from behind several squadrons of British cavalry sallied forth and plunged in among them. The big guns became silent at this magnificent charge, for they could not continue their work without striking down friend as well as foe.

Striking right and left with their heavy swords, and using their revolvers with telling effect, the horsemen forced their way into the crowd of Turks, cutting them down and dropping them with a well-directed fire.

At the same moment the infantry in the center and on both wings of the British line was hurled into the battle. They advanced with a shout, dark-skinned Egyptians rubbing elbows with the British regulars in their eagerness to get at the foe.

General Bryant smiled as he perceived the eagerness with which the native troops sprang forward. Whatever fear of treachery he might have had vanished on that instant.

The native troops on the wings fought with great courage, throwing themselves into the midst of the fray with reckless abandon.

They gave no thought to the fact that men were being mowed down on all sides by the fire of the Turkish batteries and the rifles of the enemy's infantry. They advanced steadily, in spite of their eagerness and in perfect formation, well spread out that they might be spared as much as possible from the enemy's artillery fire.

The Turkish general, realizing that his troops were getting the worst of it, hurried reinforcements forward with all possible dispatch, and these rushed into the battle with enthusiasm.

General Bryant was informed of their coming

and took prompt action to meet them. Reserves of the British line were quickly thrown forward, and, when the Turkish reinforcements came up with their worsted comrades, they were still unable to pierce the British line, try as they would.

The English, with their native allies on either flank, held like a stone wall. The Turkish commander threw his men forward in repeated assaults upon this thin line, but was unable to bend it.

Then he ordered his troops to fall back to their original position.

This was the moment for which General Bryant had been waiting. Members of his staff dashed to all parts of the field as fast as their horses could bear them, and a cheer went up from the British as they realized the import of the messages carried to the various commanders.

The British were about to assume the offensive.

In spite of the overwhelming numbers of the foe, in spite of a deadly hail of rifle bullets and in spite of the terrible execution of the enemy's artillery, the British swept forward all along the line. Rifles cracked, cannon roared and men shouted.

The Turkish commander took immediate steps to meet this grand assault. He massed his men at the points that seemed to be most threatened, determined to drive back the British at all hazards.

It was apparent, or so believed the Turkish commander, that the British would deliver their main

attack through the center, where the English troops were gathered. It was, therefore, upon this part of the field that the Turkish artillery now concentrated its fire, while General Ashard Pasha drew upon his left wing to strengthen his center.

Here the Turkish commander played right into General Bryant's hand. Making a strong show of force in the center, General Bryant ordered the English troops forward at the double. The Turkish commander drew still more heavily upon his left wing.

Then, as the Turkish and British centers became hotly engaged, General Bryant executed his coup. The British wing, composed mostly of native and Indian troops, though with a few English at the extreme right, dashed forward, squadron after squadron of cavalry showing the way.

Too late the Turkish commander saw the ruse, and realized that he had been outgeneraled. He acted promptly, and hurried supports to his threatened left wing, but he had delayed too long. The British were upon the left flank of his great army, enveloping it, cutting it to pieces.

At the same time the British center turned diagonally to the right, and succeeded in effecting a junction with the far advanced right wing. The Turkish left fell back in disorder.

Perceiving the plight of the left wing, now disorganized and facing annihilation, fear took posses-

sion of the Turkish center, and it gave way. In vain the officers attempted to hold their men steady, springing in among them with oaths and striking right and left with the flat of their swords.

The Turkish army was threatened with demoralization, and then it became a fact. The center, as well as the left wing of the enemy, turned and fled.

At the same moment General Bryant delivered a smashing attack upon the enemy's right. They gave slowly at first, then faster, until at last they were flying in utter confusion.

Then, from all along the British front, the great field batteries broke out afresh, shelling the rear of the flying Turkish army. The execution was terrible, and men went down by the thousands.

The British cavalry gave chase to the enemy, and pursued them for a considerable distance, doing great damage; but at last a recall was sounded and the British drew back.

Again had success crowned the British arms. Once more the threatened invasion of Egypt and the destruction of the Suez Canal had been averted.

And a great cheer rose from the host of Great Britain!

CHAPTER XVIII.

YUSEF DISAPPEARS.

Billy, Henri and Yusef were still in the prison tent when the first troops of the retreating Turkish army began to hurry by. The boys peered from the canvas flap of the tent as thousands upon thousands rushed past, hurrying for a place of safety.

The tent in which they were confined had been well beyond reach of the British shells, and as they had been kept closely inside, they could not tell how the battle progressed. But as the stragglers hurried toward the rear, the booming of the big guns became louder and the lads were not long in learning that the British had won the day.

Yusef also peered out at the flying troops, and his lips curled in derision. The boys were happy, and smiled at him, but Yusef's reply was a fierce scowl.

"He's Turk now, all right," declared Henri. "Look at the expression on his face."

"You'd think he had lost his last friend," Billy agreed.

The Turkish troops, flying in disorder and dismay, now passed by in larger numbers; and at length, glancing out again, Billy perceived that the guards set around the tent also had taken to their

heels. He acquainted Henri with this fact and they stepped outside.

No attention was paid them by the hurrying soldiers, and a moment later Yusef joined them. An hour later, as they still stood just outside the tent, the first of the pursuing British troops came into sight.

A startling change came over Yusef's face. At first it was an expression of bewilderment, then of surprise and then of gladness.

Billy, who had been gazing right at him during this transformation, opened his mouth to speak, but Yusef was the first to say anything.

"Here come the British!" he cried in perfect English. "Hurrah!"

Billy and Henri looked at him in utter amazement. Then Henri spoke quietly.

"Why this sudden change of front?" he demanded.

Yusef looked at him in surprise.

"What do you mean?" he asked.

"Why, a moment ago I could tell from your expression you were ready to jump in and help the Turks."

"You are mistaken," was the reply. "Why should I help the Turks? What are they to me?" He looked around curiously, and again an expression of surprise flitted over his face. "How did we get here?" he demanded.

"You brought us back here, of course," answered Billy shortly.

"I did? When? What for?"

"To turn us over to your friends, the Turks, of course," replied Billy angrily.

"I can't remember anything about it," said Yusef, shaking his head. "The last thing I remember was standing before General Brush in Cairo, and it seems to me I saw a familiar face."

"You mean to tell me you don't remember the rumpus you kicked up?" cried Billy.

"Rumpus? What rumpus?"

Billy threw up his hands in a gesture of helplessness. Then he lifted his hat and made Yusef a profound bow.

"You win," he exclaimed. "When it comes down to real picturesque lying, you're the best I ever saw —and that goes. I'll have to give you credit. You're all right."

A flush of anger crept over Yusef's face.

"What do you mean?" he demanded.

"Oh, you know what I mean, all right. Say! What's the use of all this foolishness, anyhow?"

Henri pointed toward the swiftly approaching British.

"There is the use," he said, before Yusef could speak. "He wants to be on the winning side; that's all."

"That," said Yusef quietly, "is not true. "I give you my word I know nothing of how I came here."

"From what I've seen of you, your word doesn't amount to a whole lot," muttered Billy. Aloud he added: "Then you don't remember cleaning out General Brush's quarters?"

"Cleaning it out?"

"Yes, cleaning it out. You laid us all out and escaped. Then you stole an aeroplane and started back here. We followed you and you nailed us. Don't remember that, eh?"

Yusef shook his head decisively.

"No, I don't remember," he replied.

"Well," said Billy, "you—oh, what's the use?"

He broke off and turned to Henri.

"Here come the British," said Henri. "I guess we are safe enough now."

Yusef tapped Billy on the shoulder.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked.

"I think you are entitled to a free membership in the Ananias club," was the lad's reply; "but I guess the safest thing is to turn you over to the British for safekeeping."

"What will they do with me?"

"You know as much about it as I do. I wouldn't be surprised if they stood you up against a wall and took a shot at you."

"Not if I know it," replied Yusef. "You say I'm

a Turkish officer. If the British have decided to shoot me, I guess I'll stay Turk."

"You'll be a dead Turk when your friends get through with you," said Billy. "They've got it in for you, too, you know."

"Why?"

"Because they have found you out, as well as the British have."

"Found me out? How?"

"Say!" cried Billy. "What's the use of my telling you all this stuff? You know more about it than I do."

"I assure you——" began Yusef.

"Then you haven't double-crossed the Turks?" demanded Billy. "Well, believe me, they think you have. The British want you, and the Turks want you, and you'll probably fare as well with one as with the other. What are you going to do about it?"

"In that case," replied Yusef, "I'll stick by myself."

He sprang suddenly toward a horse that stood a few yards away, and before either Billy or Henri could stop him, was astride the animal and dashing off through the desert.

"After him!" cried Billy.

"What with?" demanded Henri.

Billy glanced quickly about him. There was not

another horse near, nor could they see a sign of an abandoned aeroplane.

"What do you think of that?" demanded Billy, somewhat crestfallen.

"I am rather glad he has escaped," replied Henri. "I don't know what to make of him. Sometimes I believe he has told the truth and sometimes I don't. He is a queer character. I wish I knew."

"You know as much as you ever will," declared Billy. "Of course he has been lying. Look how suddenly he changed front when he saw the British approaching."

"Perhaps you are right—I suppose you are. Still, I'd like to be sure."

"Well, I'm sure enough for both of us," said Billy. "But come; let's see if we can get a word with General Bryant."

They advanced toward the approaching British, who were only a few yards away, and passed among them. For almost two hours they walked, being challenged frequently, until they finally reached the general's quarters.

They sent their names in by an orderly, who returned with the word that the British commander would see them at once. They followed the orderly.

"How are you, boys?" was the greeting of General Bryant, when they stood before him. "What are you doing here?"

"We were prisoners in the Turkish camp, sir, but the Turks ran off and left us."

"But I thought you went to Cairo?"

"So we did, sir, but we came back this way looking for Yusef."

"Didn't you turn him over to General Brush, as I commanded?" asked the general anxiously.

"Yes, sir," replied Billy. "But he didn't stay turned over, sir."

"What do you mean?"

"He got away again. We came after him, and he gobbled us up. We were all prisoners in the Turkish camp together."

"Yusef, too?"

"Yes, sir. The Turks didn't believe his loss of memory story any more than we did, sir."

"And he still sticks to it?" inquired the commander.

"Yes, sir. So now that the Turks and British are both after his scalp, he's gone off across the desert by himself. We tried to stop him, but we were too late, sir."

The general was silent for some minutes, thinking.

"He is a queer character," he said at last, "and he should be captured. He is liable to work more mischief. Have you any idea where he was bound?"

"Not the slightest, sir."

"Very well. I guess we shall have to let him go."

He signified that the interview was at an end, and the lads left his tent.

For several hours they wandered about among the British troops, helping the wounded and listening to the tales of the battle as told by the soldiers. Here they were able to pick up more personal details of the fierce fighting, and they heard with awe some of the stories.

Toward nightfall, as they were once more passing the general's quarters, the commander himself appeared before it. He saw Billy and Henri and beckoned them to approach.

They did so.

"I have a dispatch of importance that must be delivered to General Brush at once," said General Bryant. "Will you take it for me?"

"Yes, sir," replied Billy.

"Good!" The general placed a piece of paper in the lad's hand and added:

"Tell Major Campbell to place one of the aeroplanes at your disposal. There is no answer."

The lads saluted, and made their way to where the air craft were parked. They found Major Campbell without much trouble, and soon were in the air once more, their faces turned toward Cairo.

"Sergeant Scott will be disappointed when he

learns that Yusef has escaped," remarked Henri, as they flew along.

"He won't be any more disappointed than I am," declared Billy. "I haven't got even with him yet for the little job of marooning us on the Sphinx."

"That seems to worry you a whole lot."

"Why wouldn't it? It was hot up there!"

CHAPTER XIX.

AN ADVENTURE IN CAIRO.

Cairo was reached without incident, and Billy put the communication with which he had been entrusted into the hands of General Brush while it was still early in the evening.

General Brush was greatly disappointed to learn of Yusef's escape. "I'd give something to have him safe," he declared.

As the boys turned to the door, the general halted them.

"I wish you would report to me tomorrow at noon," he said. "I have an important matter that I should like to have you undertake for me."

"We shall be here, sir," replied Henri.

The lads saluted the general and made their way to the street.

"May as well hunt up Sergeant Scott and see if he can find us a place to bunk," said Billy.

The sergeant was in when they reached his quarters.

"So you're back again," he greeted them, "and I suppose Mr. Yusef is in limbo?"

"Mr. Yusef," replied Billy, "took his departure

very unceremoniously, without stopping to say good-by. We don't know whether he is in Asia or Africa."

Henri related their recent experiences.

"Well, that's tough," admitted Sergeant Scott. "What are you going to do? Let him go?"

"He's already gone," declared Billy. "Fat chance we would have of finding him, wouldn't we?"

"You don't suppose he could have returned to the city?" asked the sergeant.

"No, I hardly believe so," was the reply, "and still he might. He may have appropriated an airship or a flat car. I hadn't thought of that."

"But the English Yusef can't fly," suggested Henri.

"Rats!" was Billy's expressive rejoinder. "Henri, I'm beginning to believe you take some stock in that story."

"I try not to, but I don't seem to be able to help it," Henri admitted.

"It's nothing but a trumped-up lie," declared Billy. "The sooner you get that into your head the better. He's fooled us too many times now."

"Tell you what," spoke Sergeant Scott; "it's early yet—only a little after nine—we'll wander back to that little café. If your Turk friend has made his way back to town, he is almost certain to stick his nose in there for a few moments."

"A good suggestion," declared Billy, slapping his leg. "What do you say, Henri?"

"It won't do any harm," was the latter's reply, "and, as Sergeant Scott says, it's early."

"Come on, then," said the sergeant.

He led the way, and half an hour later the three again sat at the table in the far end of the room—the same one at which they sat before when they gained trace of Yusef.

They waited for several hours, scanning the face of each newcomer closely; but they saw no sign of Yusef.

"Nothing doing tonight," declared Billy finally. "We might as well turn in. Can you find a bunk for us, sergeant?"

"Sure," replied that worthy, "you can bunk in my bed and I'll use the floor."

"Billy and I'll take the floor," protested Henri.

"We won't argue about it," replied the sergeant. "Let's get out of here."

He arose and made his way down the line of tables toward the door, Billy and Henri following close at his heels.

As he neared the door a native, who had been eyeing them intently, suddenly thrust out a foot and the sergeant went sprawling to the floor. He was up in an instant, and Billy and Henri drew back a step as Sergeant Scott faced about angrily.

"Who did that?" he demanded in great wrath.

There was no reply, and the sergeant repeated his demand, in an even louder voice.

To Billy and Henri this was a new side of the easy-going officer they knew. Never before had they seen him lose his temper, but he had plainly lost control of himself now.

"I say who tripped me?" bellowed the sergeant angrily.

The room suddenly became very still. The steady buzz of conversation of a moment before was hushed. There was a scraping on the floor as several chairs were pushed back. All eyes were focused upon Sergeant Scott and the two boys.

The native who had tripped the sergeant now arose to his feet, and smiled, bowing low.

"It was my fault, sir," he said in perfect English. "I beg your pardon. It was an accident and I am sorry."

Sergeant Scott glanced quickly at the dark-skinned faces about him, and noted the evil smiles. Caution whispered to him to make his way out in peace, but the sergeant was beyond caution.

Billy took him by the arm.

"Let's get out of here, sergeant," he said in a low voice.

The sergeant shook off the boy's detaining hand and looked sternly at the native, who still faced him, a slight smile on his dark face.

"It was an accident," repeated the native. "I am sorry."

The sergeant was not fooled. He knew that he had been tripped purposely, and for some reason that he could not think of. He took a quick step forward and looked the English-speaking native squarely in the eye.

"You lie!" he said very quietly.

The native stepped back with an exclamation, and his hand dropped to the pocket of his loose-fitting coat. But even as he took the backward step, Sergeant Scott's right fist shot out and the man tumbled to the floor.

Instantly the café was in an uproar. Chairs were hurled back with a clatter as men jumped to their feet. Voices raised in anger added to the din. A heavy knife sang over the sergeant's head and struck the wall behind, where it stuck, quivering.

"Quick, boys! Run for the door!" cried the sergeant, suiting the action to the word.

Billy and Henri dashed after him, but they were too late.

Half a dozen natives sprang between them and the door, and, barring the progress of the three, swung the door shut, and stood with their backs to it.

Sergeant Scott produced a revolver and levelled it at the crowd. But even as he would have pulled

the trigger, Billy, who had not lost a whit of his coolness, cried out:

"Don't shoot, sergeant! Not unless it is necessary!"

The sergeant realized the import of the boy's words and knew that he was right. He reversed the weapon and brought the butt down on the head of a stout squat native, who jumped for him at that instant.

"Smash!" The revolver found its mark and the native toppled over with a groan.

Billy and Henri also now produced their revolvers, and, clubbing them, sprang to the sergeant's side.

The quarrel was none of their seeking, but they had no intention of leaving the officer to fight it out alone. They ranged themselves one on either side of him, and dashed toward the six figures in the door.

The long arms of the sergeant swung about like flails, and wherever one found its mark the target crumpled up and went to the floor.

The men in the door were scarcely prepared for so furious an attack, and gave ground as the three figures dashed right in among them. Sergeant Scott accounted for two more of the foe, and Billy and Henri each sent one to the floor. The others turned and fled.

With their backs against the front door, Ser-

geant Scott and the two lads turned just in time to receive the attack of the men from behind. Of these there were perhaps ten, and they sprang forward without a pause.

"We'll have to shoot!" declared the sergeant.

He did not wait for a reply, but quickly reversing his revolver again, pulled the trigger. The bullet plowed into the midst of the approaching figures. A man went down and the rest drew back.

Billy and Henri now also brought their revolvers to bear, and covered the crowd.

"Move and we fire!" cried the sergeant.

The crowd hung back, but only for a moment. From a distant corner of the room came a flash of fire, followed by the sound of a report, and a bullet whistled over the sergeant's head.

Sergeant Scott uttered an angry growl and fired rapidly three times. The weapons of each lad spoke once. But the combat was too unequal to be long continued, and there is no telling just what might have occurred but for an unusual happening.

The British sergeant and the two boys stood with their backs against the door, which opened outward, but neither had yet had an opportunity of turning and opening it.

But now, as the crowd pressed forward with a wild yell, a hand from without suddenly turned the knob, and the door flew back, precipitating Sergeant Scott and the two boys backward.

Down the short flight they tumbled heels over head, bumping into each other as they went. In spite of the suddenness of this proceeding, however, each clung tightly to his revolver.

At the bottom they scrambled quickly to their feet. Neither had been seriously hurt, although all were considerably jarred by the fall.

At this moment the head of the first of their foes appeared in the doorway. Sergeant Scott quickly raised his revolver and took a snap shot. The head was withdrawn, but the sergeant was unable to tell whether he had scored a hit.

He turned to Billy and Henri.

"Run!" he shouted.

The three took to their heels, and as they fled bullets flew after them. Not one found its mark, however, and soon the trio was beyond pursuit. They drew up to a walk, panting.

"Whew!" exclaimed the sergeant. "That was close work!"

"Rather," said Billy dryly. "But why didn't you accept the man's apology when he offered it?"

"Because he was lying," declared the sergeant.

"What of that? It would have prevented a fight."

"Well," said the sergeant, "I recognized the man."

"Who was he?" inquired the boys eagerly.

"Friend of your friend Yusef," was the reply.

"The man who fixed the airship for him the other night."

"But we left him for dead when we captured Yusef," protested Billy.

"Can't help that. I'll take my oath it was the same man!"

CHAPTER XX.

ON A NEW MISSION.

"THEN friend Yusef is probably hereabouts himself," exclaimed Billy.

"Not necessarily," replied Henri, as they made their way back to the sergeant's quarters. "The fellow the sergeant recognized may not know what has become of Yusef."

"That's true, too," admitted Billy. "Besides, Yusef wasn't heading in this direction when he made off."

"He wasn't heading in any particular direction," said Henri. "He was just on the move; that's all."

"I don't imagine there is any use hunting for him in Cairo," agreed the sergeant. "He'll probably steer clear of this place for some time to come."

At that moment they came in front of the sergeant's quarters.

"Here we are," said Billy, "and I think we are entitled to a few winks."

They entered and soon were abed and fast asleep.

The lads were about early in the morning, mindful of their promise to report to General Brush. They strolled about the city all the forenoon, keep-

ing their eyes peeled for a possible sight of Yusef, but saw nothing of him, and promptly at 12 o'clock they reported to General Brush.

That officer received them immediately and came to the point of his mission at once.

"You may remember," he said, "that upon your first appearance here you spoke of an uprising in Algeria?"

The boys nodded.

"Then it may interest you to know," continued the general, "that no such uprising occurred. For some reason it was indefinitely postponed, and the French authorities in Algiers now scout such a possible uprising.

"But the reason I asked you here is this," and the general paused a moment to let the import of the words that were to follow strike home. "I have learned, through certain sources—sources in which I place firm reliance—that the natives delayed their uprising only because they learned the French were prepared for them."

"You mean that there is yet to be an uprising?" demanded Billy, interrupting.

"Such is my information," replied the general calmly. "If it were here, we should be prepared. But for some reason or other the French military authorities in Algeria take no stock in the threatened revolt. Why, I don't know. However, I have certain documents which if put before General

Broussard will convince him. It is these documents I wish you to carry for me."

The general paused and looked at the lads inquiringly.

"I do not send one of my own aviators," he continued, "because I have need of them all here, for reasons that now must remain secret. Will you undertake the mission?"

"Of course, sir," replied Henri quietly.

"We shall be glad to," declared Billy.

"Very well."

The general turned to his desk and produced a small package. This he passed to Henri.

"You will see that these are delivered into the hands of General Broussard at the earliest possible moment," he said.

"It shall be done, sir," replied Henri quietly.

As they were about to take their leave, Billy suddenly turned to General Brush.

"There is one request I should like to make, sir," he said.

"If it is in my power, consider it granted," was the reply.

"Then, sir, we should like to have Sergeant Scott accompany us. He may come in handy, sir."

"You shall have him." The general turned to his desk and began to write. "To what regiment is he attached?"

Billy told him, and the general resumed his writing.

"Here," he said, passing the lad two sheets of paper, "is an order relieving Sergeant Scott from duty, and also an order upon Major Brown for any aeroplane you may select."

As the boys passed out the door, he continued:

"I need not impress upon you that haste is essential."

Billy and Henri were delighted with the confidence General Brush had placed in them by entrusting them with this important mission. They went first to the aeroplane park, where they selected a machine, and asked Major Brown to have it ready within the hour. Then they hunted up Sergeant Scott.

"Well, sergeant," said Billy, "I understand you are about to take a trip."

"Trip," repeated the sergeant. "Oh, I see; you mean we are going to advance."

"No, your regiment will stay here," said Henri. "It's too bad you must leave them behind."

"Leave them behind!" exploded the sergeant. "What for?"

"Orders," replied Billy briefly.

"And maybe you can tell me where I am going," said the sergeant with fine sarcasm, as he proceeded to fill his pipe.

"Algeria," said Henri.

Sergeant Scott's pipe fell at his feet, where it broke in many pieces. The sergeant eyed the boys aggrievedly.

"See what you have done," he exclaimed. "I have had that pipe for years."

"I've noticed that by the odor," said Billy dryly.

"So I'm going to Algeria, eh?" continued the sergeant. "Who said so?"

"General Brush," from Billy.

"And what do I want to go to Algeria for?" demanded the sergeant.

"Well, for one thing, a little trip."

"Trip? I'm not in Africa for my health. I'm here to fight."

"You'll have company on this trip," said Henri quietly.

"I will, eh? Some big dub of an officer, I suppose."

"Call us what you please," said Billy with a grin. He drew himself up and patted himself on the chest. "Behold your companions for the journey," he exclaimed.

Sergeant Scott jumped to his feet.

"You and Henri?" he asked eagerly.

"Right you are, sergeant."

"Well, why didn't you say so in the first place? That makes a difference."

"I'm glad to hear that," replied Henri. "How soon can you be ready?"

"Soon as I can dig up another pipe and lay in a supply of tobacco."

"Well, get a hustle on," said Billy, "and meet us in the aeroplane park in forty minutes."

"How are we going? Airship?" asked the sergeant, his face falling a bit.

"Airship is right," replied Billy briefly.

"Oh, well, I guess it is all right," replied the sergeant, "but I'd rather go some other way."

"You may come back in a box," said Billy cheerfully, "but we'll try the air route going."

Billy and Henri made their way back to the aeroplane station, while the sergeant rummaged through his few belongings in search of another pipe. He found this at last, and set out in quest of tobacco. Of this he laid in a good supply, for he did not know how long their journey might take, and he appropriated a pocketful of matches. Then he was ready to go, and made his way to the aeroplane station, where the boys were awaiting him.

For their journey the lads had selected a machine somewhat larger than the last craft they had flown. It had a seating capacity of six, and was very roomy.

Sergeant Scott eyed the machine somewhat askance before he climbed in gingerly and took his seat aft.

"I suppose this is all right," he muttered, "but the ground looks good to me."

Henri took his place at the engine and examined it carefully. Everything was satisfactory, and Billy climbed to his place at the wheel. He tested the steering apparatus carefully, and finally nodded in satisfaction.

Willing hands gave them a start, and the machine went skimming across the ground. Rapidly it gathered headway, and then Billy threw over the elevating lever.

The aeroplane soared in the air.

The lads heard a grunt from behind, and glanced back to see what was wrong with the sergeant.

There he sat, with his head bowed toward the bottom of the plane, his hands gripping the side of the craft fiercely. Billy and Henri laughed.

"What's the matter, sergeant?" called the former.

"You know what's the matter," came the reply. "This is not the first time I have been up in one of these things, but they always hit me in the same place, and that's in the neighborhood of the stomach."

"You'll soon get used to it," Henri called back over his shoulder.

"If I don't," replied the sergeant, "you'll have to bury me up here. I can't feel like this long—and live."

But the sergeant was not long in overcoming his illness and trepidation. An hour later he was sitting

as straight as Billy and Henri themselves, and was gazing about with frank curiosity.

"Better, sergeant?" asked Billy.

"Yes, I guess so. It's all right as long as we fly straight. It's the jump up and the sinking sensation that get me."

"Have you mapped out your course, Billy?" asked Henri.

"Yes. I guess I have her figured out all right."

"Well, keep away from the direction of the Sahara. We don't want to pay a return call."

"I should say not," declared Billy. "Believe me, old top, I won't get any closer to it than I have to. We'll stick well to the north, and head down from that way."

"Suits me," agreed Henri.

"Say!" called the sergeant. "How long is it going to take us to get wherever it is we are going?"

"With luck, we should be there by morning," replied Billy.

"Well, here's hoping for luck, then," was the sergeant's reply. "I am beginning to get lonesome for my old pipe already."

CHAPTER XXI.

MISFORTUNE.

THE journey was uneventful, and the big machine came down in the outskirts of Algiers, the capital and chief seaport of Algeria, situated on the Mediterranean.

"Algiers," said Henri, as they climbed from the aeroplane, "is a very popular winter resort. Because of the warlike conditions, however, I don't suppose we shall find many tourists here now."

"What we want to find is General Broussard," replied Billy, "and we want him quick."

"Then we had better start hunting," said Henri.

"Going to leave this airship standing here by its lonesome?" demanded Sergeant Scott. "One of these natives is liable to get playful and walk off with it."

"So he is," declared Billy. "Tell you what, Henri, you deliver the package and the sergeant and I'll stay here on guard. You speak French and I don't. I'd wander around like a lost sheep, not knowing the lingo."

"You're the doctor," said Henri.

Billy took the package from his pocket and turned it over to his chum.

"Break a few speed records," he instructed, as Henri prepared to take his departure.

"I can parlevous a little myself if it's necessary," spoke up Sergeant Scott, "but if a native opens up on me with his jabber it's all off."

"Good-by," called Henri. "I'll be back as soon as I can. You wait right here."

"We'll wait," growled the sergeant. "So long."

Henri hurried away, and Billy and Sergeant Scott sat down on the ground beside the aeroplane. Billy arose a few moments later, remarking:

"Might as well look this thing over a bit."

He proceeded to inspect the machine carefully, testing the gearing and examining the propellers. Then he gave a grunt of satisfaction, and resumed his seat beside the sergeant.

"All shipshape?" demanded that worthy, as he pulled on his pipe, which he had filled the moment he hit the ground.

"All set," Billy agreed.

The sergeant grunted, and, leaning back on his elbow, puffed luxuriously.

As Henri made his way through the dirty and narrow streets of the city he looked about curiously. Mostly the thoroughfares were thronged with dark-skinned natives, hard-looking customers of evil visage. A few Europeans strolled about.

He finally encountered a French officer, and from him gained the direction to General Broussard's

quarters. He glanced at his watch. It was a quarter after nine o'clock.

"Lots of time," he muttered to himself.

He entered a house somewhat larger than its neighbors, where, he had been told, General Broussard made his headquarters. Just inside he was accosted by a native of huge stature, who was attired in the uniform of the French native troops. The man spoke French fluently, as Henri perceived when he addressed him.

"Whom do you desire to see?" demanded the native, as he barred the lad's progress.

"General Broussard," was the lad's reply.

"On what business?"

"I have a communication of importance from General Brush, commanding the British forces in Cairo."

"What is the nature of the communication?"

Henri glanced at the native sharply. It was the lad's idea that the man was asking too many questions.

"I'll tell that to the general," he replied quietly.

"Why not tell it to me? I am General Broussard's orderly."

"Because I don't choose to tell you," declared Henri. "My instructions are to deliver this package," he tapped the breast pocket of his coat, "into General Broussard's own hands."

"The general has not yet arisen," explained the

native. "He instructed me, before retiring, to receive all messages."

"Well, you won't get this one," replied Henri briefly.

"You can't see the general now," declared the big native. "He will not be about for an hour."

"Then I shall wait," said Henri.

With a quick movement he slipped by the native, and sank into a chair in what appeared to be a small ante-room.

The dark face of the native officer seemed to turn even blacker, but Henri did not notice this. When he again glanced at him, the man was smiling pleasantly.

"I suppose I was a bit rude," he said, smiling. "You must pardon me, but the general has so many fanatic callers that he does not see all of them."

"That's all right," replied Henri, having no reason to doubt the truth of the explanation.

"If you will tell me the nature of your communication, I shall repeat it to the general," continued the native. "Thus you may avoid a long wait."

Henri considered. He could see no reason why he should not tell the nature of his errand.

"General Brush has sent me with positive proof of a threatened native outbreak in Algeria," he explained. "He wished General Broussard to have it at the earliest possible moment."

"The general will put no credence in such a

story," said the native with a wave of his hand. "Already many rumors have been run to earth and found to be without foundation."

"Perhaps," admitted Henri. "I don't know anything about it. But these papers will set General Broussard clear on the matter. At least General Brush believes they will."

The native officer seemed about to speak again, but instead he motioned Henri to wait, and entered the next room. He was back in a few moments.

"I was mistaken when I told you the general had not arisen," he said with a smile. "He has gone to a little café around the corner for breakfast. Will you wait here, or shall I take you to him?"

"The latter, if it is not too much trouble," replied Henri.

"No trouble at all, I am sure," was the answer. "Come!"

He led the way to the street, Henri following him closely. Around several corners they turned, and were now even in a dingier section of the town. And at last the lad's guide led the way into what Henri saw was a little café.

At the door he stopped and gazed around. He accosted another native.

"Where is General Broussard?" he demanded.

"He left not three minutes ago," was the reply, "without waiting for breakfast. I gave him your 'phone message and he said to have you await his

return here. He will not be gone long, for his breakfast is being prepared."

The native officer turned to Henri.

"We may as well wait," the lad replied in answer to his look of inquiry. "And while we are waiting," he added, "we may as well have a bite to eat."

A waiter appeared and took their orders. They ate in silence, but when they had finished General Broussard had not appeared. Henri pushed back his chair.

"What do you suppose can be detaining the general?" he asked.

The native officer shrugged his shoulders.

"Well," continued Henri, "I shall step outside a while. You may tell the general I'll be back shortly."

He got upon his feet, and turned toward the door. The big native officer also jumped up, and barred his progress.

"It is more pleasant in here," he said. "You had better stay."

"No," replied Henri decidedly, "I am going out."

He stepped forward, but the native did not move, and still barred his path. Henri stopped suddenly.

"Let me pass," he said quietly.

"No. Stay where you are," said the native.

Henri saw that the expression of friendliness on the man's face had given way to one of hatred. And

he realized that the native could overpower him easily. He stepped back and resumed his seat.

"That's better," said the native, and also sat down.

There was silence for some moments, and then the native said:

"I see no use waiting for the chief to arrive. You may as well give me that package."

"I'll give it to the general," declared Henri.

"By chief I didn't mean the general," replied the native. "I mean my chief, Ameer Tsha, commander of the tribesmen. Give me the package!"

He half rose from his seat and extended his hand.

"What do you mean?" demanded Henri in alarm.

"Just what I say. Give me the package."

Henri jumped quickly to his feet, and reached for his revolver. He realized upon the instant that he had been betrayed.

But before he could draw his weapon his arms were suddenly seized from behind.

The native officer, seeing his prey apparently powerless, advanced round the corner of the table with an evil smile on his face.

With a sudden desperate wrench, Henri freed his arms, and, leaping quickly to one side, drew his revolver. He pointed it full at the native officer, and commanded:

"Hands up quick!"

The latter stopped in his advance, and his hands

went above his head, but there was still a smile on his face. At the same moment something whizzed by Henri's head, and he wheeled about quickly to face an attack from the opposite direction.

There stood the man who had so recently waited on him, and in his hand he held a smoking revolver. Henri quickly swung his own weapon about and pulled the trigger.

There was a sharp report, a flash of fire, and the waiter crumpled up in a heap on the floor. But before Henri could wheel to face the big native officer, he was seized in a pair of strong arms, and his hands pinioned to his sides.

In vain he struggled. All efforts he made to free himself were futile. But suddenly he felt his left arm released as the big native stepped back quickly. Henri realized the other's purpose, and tried to dodge. But it was too late. His opponent's right hand descended swiftly, and a revolver butt struck Henri a crashing blow upon the head.

Dimly the lad saw his opponent take another backward step—saw the evil smile on the latter's face. He still held his revolver, and he tried to raise it. The effort was vain. He tried to cry out. It was useless. Something seemed to spin in his head. He remembered throwing up his arms, then crashing to the floor. After that, oblivion.

CHAPTER XXII.

A PRISONER.

When Henri came back to life, confused notions filled his head, the most persistent of which was that he had been having bad dreams—a nightmare which refused to be thrown off.

There was everything to favor the nightmare hypothesis. The new world upon which he opened his eyes seemed blankly impossible. It was bounded by four white walls, and it was distressingly noisy and insecure.

By no trick of his eye or brain could he make the forbidding walls keep their perpendicular or free his ears from the intermittent thunder of noises. Besides this, the time was out of joint. It was almost dark—only a faint light coming through a queer round window in one of the white-painted walls.

Further grappling with the absurdities only made them more convincing. Rising upon an elbow, he found that he was lying upon a shelf-like bed, which was somehow connected with the reeling white walls, and the pitching and tossing assured him that he still had a stomach. He sat up.

This act made him morally certain that the fight in the café—which he now recalled perfectly—had wrought some foolish Arabian Nights' transformation, which a little better grasp upon himself would presently dispel.

Suddenly the whole situation flashed before his eyes, and he clapped his hand to his breast pocket where should have reposed the package with which he had been entrusted for General Broussard.

He came to his feet with a cry. The package was gone!

Henri put his eye to the little window and then drew back with a cry of astonishment. Outside his eyes had encountered a broad expanse of water, and some distance away, dimly visible in the semi-darkness, the outline of the shore.

He turned to what he now perceived was a door to his room, and turned the knob. The door opened and the boy dashed out and up on the deck of what a quick glance told him was a small yacht.

Several men in native Algerian dress stood about, and Henri accosted one of them, whom he perceived was vested with some authority, in French.

"Where am I?" he demanded.

"Ship," was the brief response.

"Where bound?"

"None of your business."

At that moment Henri cast his glance across the water, and there, not a hundred and fifty yards

away, her spotless sails tense, her cordage humming, her immaculate flanks slipping easily through the waves, the water hissing and churning under her forefoot, clean, glistening and dainty, a little pleasure yacht passed like a thing of life.

Henri could just make out the man at the wheel, and in the distance could see his face was white. Other people were upon the deck.

The yacht came on, drew nearer, was not a hundred feet from the stern of the vessel on which he found himself. A thought flashed through the lad's mind.

A strong swimmer, such as he, could cover the distance in a few strokes.

Henri glanced around quickly. There was no one between him and the rail. He leaped forward, and, with a shout, hurled himself over the rail into the water.

Figures leaped to the rail after him in a vain effort to intercept him. They were too late.

Even as the boy disappeared beneath the surface of the water, he heard cries from the deck of the second yacht, and when he came up once more and struck out vigorously, the yacht had slowed down, and presently came to a pause.

Henri swam toward it with long strokes. A small boat put off over the side and advanced to meet him. Willing hands reached out and pulled him over the side, and he sank down in the bottom exhausted.

Fifteen minutes later he followed his rescuers over the rail of the little yacht, and, at a command, advanced to the bridge, where a man in a natty blue uniform advanced to meet him. By his side was a young girl.

"Why, father, he is only a boy," exclaimed the girl in English.

"So he is, Ethel," replied the man, and approached Henri. "May I ask who you are, and what you were doing in the sea?" he asked politely.

"I am Henri Trouville, sir, and I came to Algiers with dispatches for General Broussard from General Brush, at Cairo. I was set upon and the papers taken from me. That's all I remember, until I came to myself aboard that vessel there," and he waved a hand in the direction of the other yacht, which was making off in the gathering darkness.

The commander of the yacht which had saved him—for such Henri saw the man was—now introduced himself.

"I am Harry Ellis, and this," turning to the girl, "is my daughter Ethel. If there is anything I can do for you, I shall be pleased. But you seem young to be selected for such a piece of work."

"I am not in the regular army, sir," replied Henri. "My chum, Billy Barry, and I, because of our familiarity with aeroplanes, have been of some service to the different armies, however."

"What!" exclaimed Mr. Ellis. "Billy Barry!

Henri Trouville! Ethel, surely you recognize those names?"

"Yes, father, the names of two of the most daring aviators in the world, and, I am glad to say, Americans."

Henri blushed as he stammered:

"Then you are Americans?"

"Come right from the good old town of Boston, Mass.," replied Mr. Ellis.

"Of course, Miss Ellis," said Henri, "I myself am not an American. I am French."

"Why, I thought——" began the girl.

"He's been chumming with an American long enough to be one, though," said Mr. Ellis. "That will help some. Now, Trouville, we are in these waters on a pleasure trip, and we shall be glad to land you wherever it will do the most good."

"Then I should like to get back to Algiers at once, sir. I may be able to recover the package that was stolen from me."

"I wouldn't bank much on that," was the reply. "You will be bucking up against a pretty stiff proposition."

"I mean to have a try, though, sir."

"Good! If I can be of any assistance, be sure to call on me."

"Thank you. Will you put about at once, sir?"

"Yes; and we shall be back by morning. In the meantime you had better turn in and get a little rest.

Come to my cabin and I'll see if I can't scare up some clothes that may come near a fit."

Henri bowed to the girl, and followed Mr. Ellis to his cabin. Here Mr. Ellis insisted that Henri sleep in the owner's own bed.

"I'm not going to turn in for some time, and I won't disturb you," he said.

Henri protested no longer. Mr. Ellis had a look at the wound on his head, and dressed it himself.

"Not bad," he said. "You'll be as good as new when I land you in Algiers in the morning. Does it hurt?"

"Not much, sir."

"Well, you roll over now and go to sleep."

Henri obeyed this injunction. Mr. Ellis returned on deck, and Henri, completely worn out, was soon fast in the arms of Morpheus.

Mr. Ellis proved to be a good prophet, and when Henri arose and donned his own clothes in the morning, he scarcely felt the wound in his head. The cut had closed and the swelling had gone down. The hair had been cut away, and a piece of adhesive plaster covered the wound.

Henri immediately went on deck, where he stood and talked to Ethel Ellis as the yacht threaded its way into the harbor, going slowly to avoid outcoming vessels. At last the anchor was dropped half a mile from shore.

"I'll take you ashore myself," said Mr. Ellis.

"And I am going, too," declared Ethel.

Her father interposed no objection, and fifteen minutes later the three were speeding shoreward in a swift little gasoline launch.

"Ethel and I will go right back aboard the yacht," explained Mr. Ellis, "so we'll drop you as soon as we land."

"Very well, sir," replied Henri.

"Do you think you can find your way about the city?"

"Yes, sir. I'll get along all right."

The launch drew in to the pier, and Henri, after shaking hands with his newly made friends, climbed ashore.

"I can't thank either of you enough for your kindness," the lad declared.

"Don't mention it," replied Mr. Ellis with a laugh.

Ethel passed the lad a card, bearing an address.

"You must come and see us when you return to America," she said.

Henri promised to do so.

"Well, good-by," said Mr. Ellis, "and good luck."

Ethel waved her hand, and the little boat put off toward the yacht. Henri stood looking after it until it reached the side of the vessel. Then he turned to the more serious work in hand.

"I'll bet Billy and Sergeant Scott are worried to

death," he exclaimed, as he made his way along the crooked street from the harbor. "Now, what had I better do first? I don't suppose there is much use looking for Billy and the Sergeant in the same place. They are probably searching for me. Guess I had better go straight to General Broussard."

He considered this for a moment, and then, thinking of no other plan, decided to put it into execution.

From a French officer he passed he gained the necessary directions.

"Wonder if the big native orderly is still on the job?" he muttered. "If he is, I'll have to be careful."

From his pocket he pulled forth a handful of change and a few bills.

"Better try and buy a gun, I guess," he said. "I may need it if the orderly is still there."

A few moments later he came across a small gunsmith shop. He went in and emerged with a large second-hand navy revolver and a small quantity of ammunition. He had loaded the weapon in the shop.

"Now it's up to me to get a move on," he told himself. "I hope the general will believe my story. If not, I'll have to try and get trace of that package, and that would be the dickens of a job."

He continued on his way.

Suddenly rounding a corner, he came upon a scene of terrible confusion. Surrounded by a crowd

of yelling native Algerians, two figures were battling desperately for their lives.

A shot rang out. For a single moment Henri hesitated. Then he dashed forward with a shout.

CHAPTER XXIII.

SERGEANT SCOTT AND BILLY GET BUSY.

Sergeant Scott and Billy remained close beside their aeroplane as they had promised Henri; but when noon came, and his chum had not returned, Billy grew worried. Sergeant Scott had slipped back upon the ground and was snoring gently.

Billy got to his feet and put an end to the sergeant's nasal exercises by the simple maneuver of prodding him gently in the ribs with the toe of his boot.

"Getting right up, sir," came the sergeant's voice sleepily, as he turned over on his side and would have slept once more.

Again Billy stirred him with his foot. The sergeant sat up and rubbed his eyes with his knuckles.

"Can't you let a man sleep in peace?" he demanded. "What's the matter, anyhow?"

"It's noon, and Henri hasn't showed up yet," replied Billy.

"Noon!" echoed the sergeant. "I must be getting to be a pretty good daylight sleeper."

He arose to his feet and stretched himself. Then he looked at Billy. He was wide awake at last.

"Now tell me what's the matter," he said.

"Matter is that Henri hasn't returned," spoke Billy.

"Maybe he and the general are talking over boyhood days," said the sergeant. "You know how it is when you meet a friend you haven't seen for ten years. You just can't——"

"This is no time for joking, sergeant," interrupted Billy. "Henri should have been back a long time ago. I fear something has happened to him."

Sergeant Scott dropped his levity upon the instant.

"That's so," he replied. "Guess we had better hit the trail after him. What'll we do with this air horse?" He indicated the aeroplane.

"I don't know," Billy made answer. "It's too big to drag along."

"We can't tote it on our shoulders, and that's a fact," agreed the sergeant. "Hold on, though; here come a couple of comic valentines. Maybe we can hire 'em to play watchdogs."

Billy turned his eyes in the direction the sergeant pointed, and beheld two natives, garbed in true Algerian dress of bright colors, approaching. They walked directly toward the two companions.

"I'll sick a little of my French on 'em," said the sergeant.

As the two natives came near he advanced, and made them a low bow. The natives, not to be out-

done in courtesy, returned the bow. Said the sergeant:

"We are called away on important business, and we would like to know if you two Ameers would be so kind as to guard our big horse here?"

"I see no horse," replied one of the Algerians.

"Beg pardon, my mistake," said the sergeant. "I should have said airship. Will you camp out here and guard it for us till we come back? We shall be willing to pay well."

The two Algerians conversed in low tones in their native dialect. Then they turned to the sergeant.

"How much?" demanded one.

"An eye for business, eh?" muttered the sergeant, and named a sum.

Again the Algerians held a consultation, and at length they nodded their heads in assent. They squatted down on either side of the big machine, eyeing it curiously.

"And you'll stay here till we come back, if it's day after tomorrow?" asked the sergeant.

The natives nodded. The sergeant turned to Billy.

"Well, I have made the dicker," he explained. "The two Ameers have agreed to accept of my money, or I should say yours, as I am a little shy myself."

"And will they wait until we come back? There is no telling when we may return."

"They said they would," replied the sergeant, who

had no intention of making it a positive statement of fact himself.

"We'll have to take a chance," said Billy. "Come on."

"Whither away?" demanded the sergeant.

"We'll have a look for General Broussard first. I don't know where to find him, so you'll have a chance to brush up on your French."

They started off in the direction Henri had gone hours before. Directly they encountered a French officer.

"May as well get headed right," remarked Sergeant Scott.

He approached the Frenchman and inquired the way to the general's quarters. The latter gave him the necessary directions, and the two companions moved forward again.

In due time they reached the place and made their way inside, even as Henri had done earlier in the day. And as had been the case when Henri sought an interview with the general inside, their progress was blocked by the native orderly.

"What do you want here?" he demanded.

Sergeant Scott looked the big Algerian up and down carefully. Then he stepped close to him and said quietly:

"We want to see the general, friend, and we want to see him right away."

"General Broussard is engaged, and can see no one," replied the native. "Come back in two hours."

"Not today," said the sergeant calmly. "You trot right along and tell the general a couple of sheiks want to see him right now, 'cause if you don't I'll just run you right in there at the point of this gun," and the sergeant showed the handle of his revolver.

The big native hesitated, and Sergeant Scott stepped close to him.

"We mean business, my friend," he continued quietly, "so get a move on."

The orderly hesitated no longer. He entered the room beyond and returned a few moments later with word that the general would receive them immediately.

Sergeant Scott and Billy followed him, and soon stood before the French commander-in-chief in Algeria.

A big man was General Broussard, red-faced and somewhat pompous. He eyed his visitors coldly as they gave the military salute and stood at attention.

"What is it?" he demanded abruptly.

"I am attached to the British army in Cairo, sir," said Sergeant Scott. "I came here with this lad," indicating Billy, "and another whom you probably saw earlier in the day."

"I have seen no one," said the general shortly.

Sergeant Scott looked at him in surprise.

"What's he say, sergeant?" asked Billy anxiously.

Sergeant Scott told him in English.

"Come, my man," said the general, also in English, "tell me your business and begone. I have work to do."

Billy now stepped forward, and in a few words explained the nature of their mission to Algiers, and mentioned the package sent by General Brush.

"Do you know the nature of the contents of the package?" asked General Broussard.

"General Brush said they contained proof of an imminent revolt of the tribesmen, sir!"

"Bah!" exclaimed the French general. "Nothing to it. I have run down the rumors and find they are groundless!"

"General Brush said the papers contained positive proof, sir."

"It would have to be positive proof before I should consider it. And you say this friend of yours had the papers?"

"Yes, sir."

"Well, I haven't seen him." The general clapped his hands, and the orderly appeared. "Did a young Frenchman call here to see me early this morning?" asked the general.

An expression of alarm passed over the native's face, but it was gone in an instant.

"No, sir," he replied.

But the expression upon the man's face had not been lost on Billy, and although it was wiped away

quickly, Billy felt positive the native knew more about Henri than he cared to admit.

"I thought not," replied General Broussard.

Suddenly Billy turned and pointed a finger straight at the orderly.

"Can you trust this man, sir?" he demanded.

The big native stepped back, and his face set in an angry frown. General Broussard was upon his feet in an instant.

"What do you mean?" he demanded warmly. "Are you accusing my own orderly of being in a conspiracy against me?"

"I don't know about that," replied Billy quietly, "but I am convinced he knows more of my friend than he will admit."

"Absurd!" exclaimed the general. "Your imagination is running away with you. When you get back to Cairo, you may tell General Brush for me that we are not sleeping here. There will be no uprising."

He resumed his seat, and signified that the interview was ended.

Without a word, Billy and Sergeant Scott followed the form of the big native to the front door, and as they passed without, the orderly bestowed a fierce scowl on them.

This was not lost on Billy, but he said nothing.

"Well, what next?" demanded the sergeant, when they were on the outside.

"I don't know," replied Billy slowly. "Henri is certainly in trouble of some kind, and I am convinced that black orderly knows something about him."

"That so? What makes you think that?"

"In the first place he was alarmed when the general questioned him. Then again Henri probably let him know what he carried. I believe the native lured him some place, took the package, and perhaps killed him."

"Don't you believe it," said the sergeant positively. "They may have got the paper, I won't dispute that. But Henri will turn up O. K."

"I hope you are right," declared Billy.

"I'm right, all right. You'll see if I'm not."

All that day they searched, but without success. The following morning they started out again, and as they walked along, Billy became aware that they were being followed.

Without turning his head, as they flitted around a corner, he made out that their trailer was none other than General Broussard's orderly. He mentioned the fact to the sergeant in a low voice.

"So?" said the sergeant quietly. "We'll show him something."

As they turned the next corner, he stepped suddenly in the shadow of a store and drew Billy in after him. A moment later the orderly came around the corner. Sergeant Scott pounced on him.

The big native gave a shrill whistle, and a crowd of dark-skinned figures sprang up as if by magic and rushed forward. Sergeant Scott hurled the native from him with a quick shove. They were surrounded.

"Back to back!" cried the sergeant.

They drew their revolvers.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A FIGHT, A FLIGHT AND A CLUB.

"Don't shoot unless you have to," cried the sergeant. "Perhaps we can bluff them off."

With levelled revolvers and standing back to back, they faced the crowd of natives, who hemmed them in on all sides.

"The first man who makes a move forward is doomed!" cried the sergeant, waving his revolver first this way and then that.

For a moment those in the front line of the mob hesitated. Those behind, however, urged them forward with low shouts and shoves.

"Make every shot count, if we have to fire," whispered the sergeant to Billy.

"I get you, sergeant," replied Billy quietly.

One man in the crowd suddenly stepped forward, and a heavy knife sang over the sergeant's head.

"Bang!" the sergeant's revolver spoke, and the man tumbled over in a heap.

For a moment the crowd, apparently surprised at this, drew off; then closed in again. It surged in on them from all sides.

"Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!"

The muzzles of the weapons in the hands of Billy and Sergeant Scott swept the surging ranks of the enemy in all directions.

Again the crowd paused in its mad rush.

It was not going to be such an easy job as they had figured, apparently. From the rear of the crowd a weapon spoke, and the sergeant's cap was lifted from his head.

"Close call!" he muttered, and fired in the direction from which the shot had come.

At this moment there was a sudden diversion, which almost turned the tide of the battle.

From the distance came another shot, and one of the natives toppled over. For a moment they drew back in surprise at this assistance for the enemy from such an unexpected source.

Again a revolver spoke some distance down the street, and a solitary figure charged the crowd from the rear.

The leaders of the mob soon realized, however, that the new opponent was but one in number, and several detached themselves from the others to take care of this newcomer.

Revolvers cracked in a steady roar now. With the odds in favor of the natives as they were, there was but one possible outcome to the struggle unless help should come.

And help did come, and it arrived in the nick of time.

There came a sudden sound of clattering hoofs, and a band of French regular cavalry hove into sight around a corner. Attracted by the sounds of confusion, and believing that a riot was taking place, the officer in command of the troop had ordered his men forward at a gallop.

They charged the crowd of natives with shouts and yells, and the mob scattered and fled in all directions.

Billy and Sergeant Scott turned for a look at the first newcomer, who had created some diversion by his first shot. And as Billy's gaze rested upon him, he uttered an exclamation of surprise and joy and darted forward.

"Henri!" he cried, and the two lads were clasped in a close embrace in another moment.

Sergeant Scott also approached Henri, and their greeting was affectionate.

At this moment the officer in command of the cavalry approached and demanded to know the cause of the commotion. Billy explained briefly, and the officer accepted the explanation.

"Take my advice and get away from here as quick as you can," he said. "They will be on the lookout for you after we have gone."

Billy turned quickly to Henri.

"Let me ask you one question," he said hurriedly. "Was General Broussard's black orderly mixed up in your disappearance in any way?"

"He was the cause of it," replied Henri.

"I thought so." The lad turned to the French officer. "Will you conduct us to General Broussard's headquarters?" he asked.

"Certainly," was the reply. "Climb up beside some of my men here."

The three did so, and half an hour later were again in the presence of the French commander-in-chief.

"General," said Billy, "this is the friend of whom I spoke."

"And has he the package?" demanded the general.

"No, sir," replied Henri, stepping forward. "It was taken from me by your orderly, sir."

General Broussard was upon his feet in a moment.

"What is that you say?" he cried in amazement.

Henri repeated his statement.

"It is incredible," exclaimed the general. "Are you sure?"

"Positive, sir!"

"And I," said Billy, advancing a step, "can swear that it was your orderly, sir, who instigated the street attack upon us a short time ago. I recognized him, sir."

General Broussard tapped a bell on his desk. There was no reply.

"I doubt if he'll come back, sir," said Billy.

But in this the lad was mistaken.

Again General Broussard rang the bell, and in response to this second summons the native orderly appeared in the doorway.

The boys stood at one side of the room, and the native did not see them. He advanced to the general and saluted. His left hand was wrapped in a bandage.

"What is the matter with your hand?" demanded General Broussard.

"I cut it on a piece of glass just now, sir," was the reply.

"And where have you been? Why was it necessary for me to ring twice for you?"

"I was having the injury dressed, sir."

"Are you sure," said the general, "that you haven't a pistol wound in your hand?"

"Why do you ask that, sir?" exclaimed the orderly in no little alarm.

For reply General Broussard motioned Henri to step forward.

"Did you ever see this young man before?" he asked of his orderly.

The big native took one look at Henri's face, then uttered a cry and turned and dashed from the room.

"After him!" cried the general.

Billy, Henri and Sergeant Scott gave chase. Out upon the street the native ran, and then turned to the left and made off in the direction of the desert

end of the city. Billy, Henri and the sergeant kept after him as fast as their feet could hit the ground.

"We've got to get him," declared Billy through his teeth. "We must have back that package."

The orderly rounded a corner sharply, and for a moment was hidden from the sight of his pursuers. When the latter came to the corner, however, they caught sight of him again, a hundred yards down the street.

Keeping up his tremendous speed, the native turned sharply twice more, and the pursuers had hard work to keep sight of him. They made their second turn just in time to see him disappear within the front door of a small native dwelling.

Henri was the closest behind him. He dashed forward and tried the door. Then he stepped back with an ejaculation. It was locked.

At the same moment, from above, a shot rang out, and Henri felt a bullet whiz by his ear. He immediately dropped to the ground, and wriggled to a place of safety.

"We've run him to his hole," said Billy a few moments later, when the three stood back at a discreet distance from the house. "The question now is how to chase him out."

"The trouble is that the hole may have two ends," said Sergeant Scott. "He is liable to have sneaked out by this time."

"My idea," declared Henri, "is that if one of us

could get in there, we might learn something of advantage."

"Sounds all right," Billy agreed, "but it would likely be a tough piece of work."

"Well, we have got to get back that package, and that's all there is to it," declared Henri. "We were instructed to give it to General Broussard, and I won't rest until we have done it."

"Nor I," exclaimed Billy.

"Then," said Henri, "as it was my fault that it was lost, it's up to me to get in there after it."

"Not much!" exclaimed Sergeant Scott. "Being somewhat longer in the tooth than you boys, I have selected that for my job."

"But, sergeant," protested Henri, "there is no——"

"You heard me say I was going, didn't you?" demanded the sergeant. "Remember that I am an army officer—a sergeant—and I won't be dictated to by a couple of noncombatants. That goes!"

Nor could the sergeant be shaken from this resolve.

"The first thing," he said, "is to figure out a means of entrance."

"Which is quite a job in itself," declared Billy.

"True," agreed the sergeant, "but nevertheless I have a plan."

"Let's hear it," cried the boys eagerly.

"My plan is this: I'll advance straight to the

house. You stay here, and if a head shows any place, take a shot at it. If you can keep all heads out of sight, I may be able to get in without being seen. As soon as I am in the house, Billy, you follow my lead. Once under the shelter of the walls of the house, creep around to the back and stand guard. Henri can stand here until I come out."

"What's your idea? To capture the general's orderly and try to make him divulge the hiding place of the package?"

"Well, that might be done," was the reply, "but if I am fortunate enough to get in without being seen, perhaps I can locate it."

"It's a risk," declared Billy, "but I guess it's one we must take."

"Either we must take it or admit we have failed in our mission," Henri agreed.

"Then we may as well get busy," said the sergeant. "All set, boys?"

"Ready," was the reply.

"Good! Now you cover my advance, 'cause if you don't I'm liable to come right back and spank both of you."

The sergeant moved off cautiously.

Within ten feet of the house, a head appeared in a window upstairs. Billy took a snap shot, and the head was withdrawn suddenly.

Upon the porch the sergeant leaned over the rail and put his hand against the shutters of a window

three feet away. The shutters came open. The sergeant stepped to the sill, and disappeared inside.

"He's in, all right," said Billy. "Here I go, Henri."

"All right, Billy, but be careful."

Billy nodded, and moved away. Henri stood with revolver ready.

CHAPTER XXV.

THE PAPERS RECOVERED.

When Sergeant Scott climbed down from the window sill inside the house, he stood stock still, listening intently. There was no sound.

"Guess they didn't hear me," he muttered.

In spite of the dim light that streamed in at the window through which he had just passed, the room in which the sergeant found himself was quite dark. It was light enough, however, for him to make out that he was alone.

He moved forward swiftly, but silently, opened the door at the far end of the room, and as silently passed through. Just outside the door he came upon a pair of steps, which he mounted noiselessly. At the top he perceived two doors, one opening on each side of the staircase.

Sergeant Scott stood still and listened. From the room to the right, at the front of the house, he heard the low murmur of voices. The sergeant chose the one on the left, and gently pushed the door open. Then he breathed a sigh of relief. The room was empty.

He stepped inside and closed the door behind him.

So far he was perfectly certain that his presence in the house had not been discovered. He walked to a window in the rear and peered out. Slinking in the shadow of the next house, he saw Billy.

"Billy!" called the sergeant in a low whisper.

The lad waved a hand, signifying that he had recognized the sergeant.

The latter glanced around the room carefully. In one corner there was a bed. The sergeant stripped it of its covering, and, tearing the covers into strips, quickly knotted the ends together. Then he dropped one end out of the window and motioned Billy to take hold.

The lad did so and hung on grimly as the sergeant, exerting his utmost strength, pulled him up and into the room.

"Sh-h!" commanded the sergeant, as the lad finally stood beside him.

He advanced to the other side of the room and opened the door a crack. Billy stood close behind him. At that moment there was the sound of a shot from the street.

"Henri!" whispered the sergeant. "One of 'em must have showed his head."

Billy nodded.

There was a slight squeak as the door of the room at the front of the house opened. Sergeant Scott clutched Billy by the arm, and drew him back behind the door.

A moment later the door to their room was pushed back, and two men stepped inside. They did not perceive the two figures behind the door, and advanced straight to the rear window.

They stopped suddenly as they perceived the improvised rope in the center of the floor, where the sergeant had dropped it when Billy was safely through the window.

One of them stooped down and picked it up.

At the same moment Sergeant Scott and Billy took a quick step forward, their revolvers levelled steadily, and the former spoke sternly in French:

"Hands up!"

The two men wheeled quickly, and made as though to draw their own weapons. One glance showed them the futility of such a move, however, and their hands went into the air.

"Take their guns, Billy," commanded the sergeant. "I'll keep 'em covered."

He shifted his position slightly so that the lad would be out of the line of fire. Billy advanced and confiscated the men's weapons.

"We've got the gent we came after," said the sergeant. "Now we'll see if he still has the package. Will you give them up, or shall we have to search you?" he asked General Broussard's erstwhile orderly.

The latter did not reply, and Sergeant Scott ordered Billy to go through his pockets.

Seeing that Billy hesitated, Sergeant Scott said:

"This is no time for squeamishness. We came after that packet, and we've got to get it. Go through him!"

Billy hesitated no longer, and made a thorough search. Then he stepped back, disappointed.

"Nothing doing," he said shortly.

"Hm-m-m!" exclaimed the sergeant. "Of course he has had plenty of time to dispose of it, but I had made sure he still had the packet with him."

At this moment the orderly muttered a few low words to his companion.

Sergeant Scott looked at him sharply, and then a slow smile broke over his face.

"Billy," he said with a grin, "what would you take that man to be?" and waved his revolver at the second prisoner.

"Well," replied Billy, eyeing the man carefully, "he looks like he might be a first-class chef!"

"So he does," agreed the sergeant, still grinning. "What if I should tell you that he is the Ameer Tsha, commander-in-chief of the Algerian tribesmen?"

Billy gazed at the sergeant in undisguised amazement.

"You have never seen the Ameer," he said. "Why should you think that?"

"Our other friend," replied the sergeant, indicating the orderly, "just addressed him as 'Ameer.'

I happened to catch the word. I'm just guessing at the other part of it. However, I have no doubt I am right."

"We don't care anything about him," said Billy. "What we want is the package we came after."

"I think we shall get it," returned the sergeant with another grin.

"How?"

"Take a little look through the Ameer's pockets," said the sergeant briefly.

"By Jove!" exclaimed Billy. "I believe you are right. This man has probably turned the packet over to him."

"Good guess," approved the sergeant. "Look him over."

As Billy approached, the Ameer drew himself up proudly, and spoke angrily, but as he used his native dialect, Billy had no idea what he was saying. The Ameer moved back a step and spoke in French.

"What's his nobs talking about?" demanded Billy of the sergeant, not touching the Algerian.

"Why," replied the sergeant, "he says, says he, that, by the beard of the prophet, if an infidel lays a hand upon his sacred person he shall suffer a thousand deaths. And also, says he, he will not allow himself to be thus defiled. Look him over now."

"Right!" replied Billy. "I'll defile his sacred person good and plenty if he doesn't keep quiet."

With one hand he took the son of the prophet by the coat, and the other he thrust into the pocket of his tight-fitting coat, the buttons of which burst as the lad jerked the coat open.

With a cry of rage the Ameer reached out a long arm and the fingers grasped Billy by the throat. Billy promptly drove his right fist into the man's face, and the son of the prophet toppled to the floor on his back.

Billy leaned over, took him by the arm, and assisted him, though not too gently, to his feet.

"Now, Mr. Ameer," he said, "you stand there till I get through with you or, by the beard of the prophet, I shall defile your sacred person more violently next time."

The Ameer stood still, though through his beard came unintelligible imprecations.

From the Ameer's breast pocket, Billy produced a small package, which he examined carefully. Then he gave a cry of triumph.

"I've got it!" he shouted.

"Then get out of the line of fire so I can look at our friends over the sights of this gun," replied the sergeant coolly. "I don't want to muss 'em up any, but I may have to."

Indeed, at that moment, it seemed that both of the natives might risk a shot and leap upon the sergeant. But Billy stepped quickly to his companion's side, and also levelled his revolver.

"Now," he said to Sergeant Scott, "the question is what to do with them."

"Suppose we had better lead them along back to General Broussard," suggested Sergeant Scott. "He might have a few words to say to them."

"Good idea," agreed Billy. "Let's go." He turned to the two men and waved his revolver toward the door. "March!" he said.

Probably they did not understand his words, but they could not mistake the gesture. They descended the stairs, with Billy and the sergeant close behind, and passed out the front door.

Henri came rushing toward them.

"Did you get the package?" he cried.

"You bet we got it, old top," answered Billy.

Henri let out a whoop of satisfaction and executed a war dance right there in the street.

"Lead on to the general," he shouted.

The three took their prisoners before General Broussard immediately. The latter signified for the boys to keep them covered while he glanced over the package of letters Billy gave him.

As he read, all could see that an expression of surprise came over his face, and he became greatly excited as he progressed.

"You were right," he said at last, looking up. "This is convincing proof of a threatened outbreak, but thanks to you, I shall be able to act in time to

avert it. The ringleaders shall be under arrest within the hour."

He stepped to the door and raised his voice, and a few moments later a young officer stepped into the room. The general sat down at his desk and wrote briefly.

"Give this to Colonel Drury," he commanded, passing a slip of paper to the officer, "and on your way order a squad of soldiers here to take charge of these prisoners."

The officer left the room. General Broussard turned upon his native orderly.

"You," he shouted, "shall be shot the first thing in the morning!"

The orderly smiled slightly, but said nothing. The general turned again to Sergeant Scott and the two boys.

"I wish to thank each of you for your gallant action," he said quietly. "Through your bravery a terrible disaster has been averted. When do you return to Cairo?"

"At once, sir," replied Billy, "or as soon as we can regain our aeroplane."

"May good luck be your companion on the journey," said the general kindly.

"Thank you, sir!" all replied in a single voice.

They left the room.

CHAPTER XXVI.

AN UNEXPECTED MEETING.

"ANOTHER sandstorm, old scout."

Billy lifted one hand from the wheel of the speeding aeroplane, and pointed to the desert below.

It was the morning of the day following their last interview with the French commander-in-chief in Algiers, and the two boys and Sergeant Scott were on their way back to Cairo.

Far below them they could see the sand lifting up in dense dark clouds as it swirled along before the wind.

As Henri would have replied to Billy's remark, a sudden gust caught the aeroplane. It rocked dangerously and swung toard the north in spite of all the attempts made by Billy's firm hand to hold it steady.

Even at this height above the desert the wind blew a gale.

Billy sent the machine a thousand feet higher in the air with a quick touch of the elevating lever; but here too the fierce wind rocked the craft violently, threatening at every moment to overturn it.

"Great Scott!" shouted Billy. "We can't stand this long."

Then the machine suddenly began to drop.

Again Billy touched the elevating lever. The machine did not respond to the touch, and as it sank lower, became even more helpless before the fierce gale.

Came a lull in the storm, and below them the sand settled so that it was possible for the occupants of the machine to make out their surroundings as the craft continued to sink.

Half a mile dead ahead Billy made out what, at that distance, appeared to be a clump of trees. He headed there as fast as the machine could travel.

They reached the shelter of the trees in safety and alighted, even as the wind resumed its fierce onslaught with renewed vigor. Sand from the desert swooped in on them, filled their eyes and almost blinded them as the three dragged the machine back into the shelter of the trees.

But at last they had it in a safe place, and in spite of the raging wind and occasional heaps of sand that came in upon them, Sergeant Scott sat down calmly on the ground, and proceeded to fill his pipe. He sheltered a match with his two hands, and then blew a cloud of smoke into the air.

"Here we are," he finally said. "Now what?"

Neither boy deemed this question worthy of answer, so kept silence, watching with awe the tricks the wind played with the big trees, as it bent them over to the ground, broke them down, picked them up and carried them away.

Five minutes later the wind died down as suddenly as it had risen. Billy rose to his feet, advanced to the edge of the trees and turned his eyes across the desert. Henri, in the meantime, explored their refuge.

"This place looks rather familiar to me," he declared after a glance around.

"Does look like home," Billy admitted. "I thought I seemed to remember the place when I first came to earth."

"What's that?" cried Henri suddenly, pointing to a moving object half a mile across the sand.

"Glory be! It looks like a man!" exclaimed Billy.

They gazed at the moving object intently.

"That's what it is!" cried Billy. "And he's in a bad way. See how he staggers about!"

Without waiting for a reply from Henri he dashed forward. Henri ran after him.

As they drew nearer they could see that the man reeled as though about to fall, and while the boys were still a hundred yards away, he suddenly threw up his hands and tumbled on his face in the sand.

As the lads dashed up they noticed that he was attired in true Algerian costume, and while they could scarcely have expected it, they were disappointed that he was not a white man.

"Turn him over, and we'll carry him out of here," commanded Henri.

Billy laid hold of the man's shoulders and rolled him over. Then he started back in amazement.

"Yusef!" he exclaimed. "How in the name of all that's wonderful did he get here?"

"Never mind how he got here," replied Henri sharply. "Let's get him back among the trees before he croaks."

He laid hold of Yusef's shoulders and Billy lifted his feet.

Yusef was a big man and a heavy one, so it was with no little difficulty and exertion that they finally reached the shelter of the trees and laid him down gently.

"Water!" ordered Henri, and Billy dashed away, returning in a moment with his cap well filled.

Henri lifted Yusef's head to his knee and bathed his face with the cold water; then, as the man stirred, poured a few drops down his throat. After some further first-aid treatment Yusef finally opened his eyes and smiled slightly. Then he signified that he wanted to be let alone, and a few minutes later sat up.

Sergeant Scott now appeared on the scene and took a look at Yusef.

"Hello! What have we here?" he asked.

"This is our old friend Yusef, Sergeant. We found him out in the desert."

"Might have been a good job to leave him there, if you ask me," grumbled the sergeant.

The boys paid no attention. Yusef opened his mouth to speak, but Billy forestalled him.

"English or Turk today?" he asked with a grin.

Yusef frowned slightly, but he spoke in English.

"I don't know why you insist on harping upon that," he said. "Surely I have explained things satisfactorily."

"Well, you have explained them, but I wouldn't just call it satisfactorily," replied Billy. "What are you doing here?"

"I don't even know where I am, do you?"

"Why, yes, you are just over the Algerian frontier from Tripoli. And if I am not mistaken your cavern home is hereabouts."

"My cavern home? What do you mean?"

Billy looked at him angrily. Then he smiled.

"Oh, well, keep it up," he said.

He turned to Henri. "I told you I recognized this place," he added. "This is where our friend Yusef brought us before."

"I had just discovered that," was the reply, "and if I am not mistaken the cave is back that way." He pointed over his shoulder.

"Want to go and have a look at your home?" asked Billy of Yusef.

"I'll go and see what you mean," was the reply.

The four walked away together. As they drew near the mouth of the cavern, two men, attired in

the same fashion as Yusef, approached and bowed low before him.

"Your slaves approach," remarked Billy. "Have you any orders for them, your Highness?"

Yusef was forced to smile.

"They may be mine, but if they are I don't know it," he replied.

"They seem to know you, all right," said Sergeant Scott.

With upraised hands, the men were backing away before him, halting occasionally to bring their palms to the ground.

"That's proof enough for me that you're the big chief in these diggings," Billy offered.

"Fairy tales are all right in their place," agreed Henri, "but what's the use, Yusef?"

"I tell you you are wrong," declared the man vehemently. "I never saw those two fellows before in my life; and, to my knowledge, I have never been here before."

"You are willing to admit they seem to know you, aren't you?"

"It does look that way. I can't understand it."

"Perhaps not," replied Billy. "Shall we take a look about inside?"

Yusef signified for him to lead on, and Billy did so.

Inside the cave the visitors were to be treated to the surprise of their lives.

A little form darted from the rear of the cavern and ran straight for Yusef. It was a boy, perhaps six years old, attired in a neat little suit of typical Turkish design. His arms were outstretched, and there was a glad light in his eyes.

With extended hands, he stopped directly in front of Yusef and broke into a torrent of unintelligible words.

Yusef drew back a step and looked at the child curiously.

"Yours?" demanded Billy.

"No," replied Yusef with a shake of his head. "I have no children."

"Well, he acts like it," declared Henri.

It was true. His advance spurned by Yusef, the child fell to the floor and broke into a torrent of tears. It was plain that Yusef was perplexed. He didn't know what to do.

At last, however, he bent over and lifted the little form in his arms. The child's sobs ceased instantly, and he smiled up at Yusef, and then laughed aloud.

"Looks a bit like you, Mr. Yusef," said Sergeant Scott with a grin. "Maybe you are married. You don't seem to remember what you have done while playing Turk."

Yusef was startled.

"Could it be possible?" he muttered. He pulled himself together. "No, it can't be. Perhaps I have

been here before and the child has taken a fancy to me. That must be it, of course."

Billy approached Yusef and looked him squarely in the eyes.

"I don't know what to make of you," he said quietly. "At first I believed your story, but when you again took up your mask I was sure I had been fooled. Try and see if you cannot remember some of your exploits with the Turkish army."

For perhaps ten minutes Yusef, still holding the little boy in his arms, thought deeply. Then he sighed.

"It's no use," he said quietly. "My mind seems to be a blank."

"Does the name Richardson mean anything to you?" asked Billy sharply.

"Richardson! Richardson!" repeated Yusef. "It does sound familiar. Where have I heard it before?"

Billy turned away without replying, but Henri approached Yusef quietly and extended a hand.

"I don't know who nor what you are," he said, "but I believe your story."

Yusef looked at him intently for some moments, then grasped the hand and pressed it warmly.

"Thanks," was all he said.

CHAPTER XXVII.

TRAGEDY AND A TRANSFORMATION.

Yusef put the little boy down; but the child laughingly took him by the hand and led him away.

Sergeant Scott turned to the lads.

"There is more to this thing than we know anything about," he said. "If the man is not telling the truth, he is concealing something more important than his identity."

"But I tell you a thing like that is impossible," declared Billy.

"I'm convinced he's telling the truth," replied Henri.

"Then he has pulled the wool over your eyes to the Queen's taste. It's lucky one of us is not so easily fooled."

"You are the one who is being fooled, Billy," declared Henri.

"I am inclined to agree with Henri," from Sergeant Scott.

"Glory be!" ejaculated Billy. "He's made a convert of you, too, eh, sergeant? I'll give him credit."

Billy stalked away in high dudgeon.

He was back in a moment, however, much out of breath.

"What's the matter?" demanded Henri and Sergeant Scott in a single voice.

"Airship," Billy responded briefly. "It's coming down just outside. Evidently Yusef is to have another caller. Now, you'll see who is right about this thing." Then suddenly: "Now, listen here! If Yusef sees us, he will probably keep up the game. Let's hide and see how he greets this newcomer."

"Anything you say, old man," Henri agreed.

They looked around quickly for a place of concealment and directly they found it—a little sheltered nook off the main chamber of the cavern. They hurried into this, where, lying flat on the ground, they gazed out, straining their ears for the sound of footsteps.

At that moment Yusef came back into the cave. Seeing no signs of Billy, Henri or Sergeant Scott, he advanced toward the entrance, but even as he would have passed through he stepped back quickly and another figure entered.

As Billy caught a glimpse of the newcomer's face he almost cried out so great was his surprise. He checked himself, however, and whispered to Henri:

"Do you recognize him?"

"No," was the reply, "I never—well, by George! General Broussard's orderly."

Billy nodded.

"The same," he said in a low voice.

Sergeant Scott also had recognized the newcomer, but he kept quiet.

Yusef looked at the big native inquiringly.

"What do you want here?" he demanded in English.

The other looked at him in surprise, then broke into a jumble of Turkish, or some other native tongue, the lads could not tell which.

After this outburst the newcomer looked at Yusef inquiringly. Yusef shook his head, and spoke in French.

"I do not understand Turkish," he said.

The other also switched to French.

"Are you playing with me?" he demanded.

"I never saw you before," declared Yusef.

"That," said the big native, "is a lie!"

Yusef doubled his big fists and took a quick step forward.

"Careful!" he said quietly. "Never use that word to me again."

"And why not?" sneered the native. "What will you do?"

"I'll probably choke it in your throat."

The big native laughed.

"That would be quite a job," he said. "But I haven't time to quarrel with you. I have other matters."

"Speak and get out," said Yusef sternly.

"Very well. In the first place, then, we have been

discovered; or, I should say, I have. I have lost the confidence of General Broussard, and in fact have been put in jail and threatened with death."

"Which you no doubt deserve," interrupted Yusef.

The native did not heed this interruption, but continued.

"Ameer Tsha also was arrested and is under sentence of death. If he is not rescued all our plans will fall through. The tribesmen will not rise without the command of the Ameer, as you know. So I have come to you."

"And what do you want me to do?" demanded Yusef. "How am I mixed up in this business? I'll have nothing to do with your dirty work."

The native looked at him in undisguised amazement. Then he said quietly:

"We must have the money immediately. With money we may do much. It will even be possible to secure the release of the Ameer. I want it now."

"I don't know what you are talking about," declared Yusef, "but I have no money for you. That is certain."

"You mean you will not give it to me?"

"Well, have it that way then, if you like it better."

The native wasted no further time in talk.

"You traitor!" he cried and leaped forward.

But the hands that would have clutched Yusef's

throat fell short as Yusef leaped lightly backward, then came suddenly forward again.

The men were about of a size, Yusef possibly an inch taller than his opponent. But what the latter lacked in height he made up in weight and general bulkiness. Both were strong men, above the average.

For several minutes they held each other in a tight embrace, straining fiercely as each sought to gain an advantage that would put the other in his power.

Billy made as if to move from his retreat to lend a hand in the struggle, but the sergeant checked him with a low word.

"This is none of our business," he whispered. "Let them fight it out."

Billy recognized the force of this reasoning, and held back. The three watched the struggling men with breathless interest.

"I hope he breaks that fellow's neck," muttered Billy to himself.

In spite of the trouble they had been put to on his account, and the dangers they had faced because of him, there was no doubt that the sympathies of both boys were with Yusef. They would have lent him a helping hand but for the sergeant, who insisted that they keep out of the matter.

The fighters continued to strain fiercely. It was

simply a question of which would give way first; and, as it transpired, this was Yusef.

Suddenly he relaxed his grip and staggered unsteadily; but before the other could take advantage of this move, he freed himself from his opponent's grasp and leaped backward.

Then, as the native paused for a breath, Yusef stepped quickly forward and struck out with his right fist. The native drew back, and while he lessened the force of the blow by this movement, he did not entirely escape it.

A tiny stream of blood trickled from his nose.

He came forward again, but Yusef now kept him at arm's length, and try as he would he could not bring the fighting to close quarters. In the meantime Yusef was planting blow after blow upon his face and body.

"He must be an Englishman!" declared Henri excitedly. "No one but an Englishman can use his fists like that."

"Or an American," supplemented Billy.

But now that he was getting the worst of the encounter, the native racked his brain for some means to bring an end to the contest.

Suddenly he stepped backward and his hand went to his sash. A revolver glittered in his grasp and came to bear on Yusef.

At that instant Yusef stepped on a rolling pebble and dropped to his knee. Even as he did so a little

form, unseen by either of the antagonists, toddled into the cavern and straight up to Yusef.

Before the latter could rise, and even as the big native pressed the trigger, the little boy had thrown his arms around Yusef's neck.

There was a flash and a loud report, followed by a piercing scream.

Upon the instant Billy leaped from his place of concealment, followed by Henri and Sergeant Scott in quick succession.

The smoke, clearing away, revealed the tragedy. Yusef was rising to his feet, but the figure of the child lay inert in front of him.

Momentarily stricken as the result of his shot became apparent, the big native staggered backward, and before he could recover himself Billy had him covered with his own revolver.

"Take his gun, Henri!" cried the boy.

The latter obeyed, while Yusef stood quietly looking at the little body at his feet. The lads glanced at him uneasily. The calm was not natural, in view of what had happened.

Then suddenly what Henri had been expecting came to pass. A change began to steal over Yusef's face; first an expression of bewilderment, followed by one of surprise, and then, as he gazed toward the native, one of rage.

He dropped upon his knee and, picking up the little form, raised it in his arms, the while mutter-

ing strange words. For a few seconds he held it tightly, then he laid it gently on the ground and turned upon the shrinking native with blazing eyes.

Once more Yusef had become a Turk!

For a space his gaze rested alternately upon his foe and upon the lifeless form, and then he cried out:

"My little son! But you shall be avenged!"

He took a quick step forward, and before either of the three spectators could realize what he was about to do, he leaped upon the native. With a terrible cry the fingers of his two hands closed about the throat of his enemy. Then he lifted him high in the air, and before Sergeant Scott or either of the two boys could put forth a hand to stay him, dashed his foe head first against the rock which formed the wall of the cavern.

Then he turned again to the figure that lay so still upon the floor. Once more he picked it up in his arms, looked quickly about the chamber, and, seeming not to notice the presence of the others, strode quickly into the compartment beyond.

Billy shuddered.

"Terrible!" he said.

"This," said Henri quietly, "should convince you of the truth of Yusef's remarkable story."

And Billy replied simply:

"It does."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

BACK TO ALGIERS.

Sergeant Scott and the two boys laid hold of the body of the native who had caused the tragedy and dragged it into the open. With such implements as they could find they dug a shallow grave and laid it therein. Then they covered it with earth.

When Yusef came forth again several hours later, therefore, there was no sign of the tragedy. Yusef gazed about the cavern, but asked no questions as he addressed Henri in French.

"I am sorry you should have been witnesses of such a scene," he said quietly. "The boy was my only son."

"Can you speak English now?" demanded Henri.

For an instant Yusef's eyes flashed angrily; then he replied:

"No."

He retired to the other compartment.

"What shall we do with him, Billy?" demanded Henri. "There is no doubt that he is English, and it certainly would not be fair to leave him here."

"Right you are, son," agreed Sergeant Scott. "In the big cities they have specialists and such things. We might have one of them look him over."

"A good idea," declared Billy. "We'll take him if we have to use force. It will be for his own good."

And this plan they agreed upon.

Yusef emerged from his retreat again half an hour later and Henri engaged him in conversation. Beyond the death of his son, whom he had buried with his own hands in the other compartment, he was unable to remember a single detail of the recent occurrences. He did not remember how the lads had dragged him from the desert or anything prior to the tragedy.

Henri's offer to take him to Algiers he declined, saying that he would stay where he was. Then Henri deemed it time to act.

"You must go with us," he said, and suddenly produced his revolver.

Sergeant Scott and Billy also covered him. Yusef glared at them angrily.

"I had always heard," he said, "that the English were kind-hearted. I never believed it, and it seems that I was right. I am your prisoner; do with me as you will."

He offered no resistance as he was marched to the aeroplane and ordered to the seat aft. He climbed in without a word, and Sergeant Scott took his place beside him with revolver ready.

Henri and Billy resumed their places, and in an-

other five minutes the machine was speeding through the air back toward Algiers.

They made a landing in about the same place where they had alighted before, and because Billy believed the first work should be to report to General Broussard, they turned their steps in the direction of his quarters, taking Yusef with them.

As they walked along Billy noticed a curious expression coming over the face of their prisoner, an expression similar to the one that had been there previous to his last transformation. But the lad said nothing.

As they walked along the dirty streets, a voice suddenly hailed them.

"Hi, there, Trouville!" it came.

Henri whirled about, and when he saw who had accosted him, his face became wreathed in smiles.

"Why, Mr. Ellis," he exclaimed, "what are you doing here? I thought you would be many miles from Algiers by this time."

"No, I'm still hanging about," replied Mr. Ellis with a laugh. "Introduce me to your friends."

Henri did so, and Mr. Ellis shook hands with Billy and Sergeant Scott in turn.

"And the other?" inquired Mr. Ellis, with an inquiring glance at Henri.

"Is a prisoner," was the lad's smiling response.

"A prisoner!" and Mr. Ellis turned his eyes upon

Yusef, who in the meantime had been gazing upon him intently.

For a moment there was silence as Mr. Ellis took a step back in amazement. Then he rushed up to Yusef with extended hand.

"Charley!" he cried gladly.

Yusef made an effort to speak, but the words would not come. Billy saw there was a gleam of recognition in his eyes.

"Charley!" exclaimed Mr. Ellis again, "don't you remember your old side partner Ellis?" and he waited with extended hand.

Suddenly Yusef stepped forth and grasped the hand extended to him.

"Harry!" he exclaimed. "Where did you drop from?"

The men wrung hands. Then Mr. Ellis turned to Henri.

"So this is a prisoner, eh? And why should my old friend Charley Richardson be under guard?"

"Well, it's a long story, Mr. Ellis," replied Henri, "and I shall be pleased to tell you later."

"Charley," spoke Mr. Ellis, "what are you doing in those red, white and green togs?"

"According to these boys," replied Yusef, for such we shall still call him, "I have been out of my head for a good many years. I don't seem to remember anything that has transpired in any of these irrational periods. I have come to myself once or

twice in the last few days, but each time I have gone back, and in either stage I don't remember what I did in my other identity. Wait a minute, though—it seems to me I remember something of a child being shot."

He turned to Billy.

"Am I right?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Billy, "it was your son."

"My son?"

"Yes; you called him that when your Turkish identity came to you."

"And then I killed the big native!" cried Yusef. "I remember."

His face lighted up, only to fall again a moment later.

"I can't remember of ever having a son, though," he added.

"Don't fret, old man," exclaimed Mr. Ellis. "It'll all come back to you in time."

"The thing that worries me most," confessed Yusef, "is that I may return to my Turkish personality and remain that way."

"Well," said Billy, "we had thought of that, and that is why we brought you to Algiers against your will."

"Then I didn't want to come?"

"No, we had to use force. But come, we must see General Broussard and report the death of his

erstwhile orderly. Shall we see you later, Mr. Ellis?"

"You can't get rid of me that way," was the smiling rejoinder. "I'm going to stick right around with my old friend. Eh, Charley?"

"Rather," was the response. "I don't want to lose you again, Harry."

All five, therefore, wended their way to the general's quarters, where the boys made their report. And here Billy asked the general if there were a specialist in town who would look Yusef over.

The general's reply was disappointing.

"There is none I would recommend for such a case," he replied.

"Tell you what we'll do," said Billy when they again were on the outside; "we'll all go back to Cairo. I know we shall find a specialist there."

"I'll go along," declared Mr. Ellis, "if you can make room for me and my daughter."

"As luck will have it, we have a six-passenger car," said Billy. "We shall indeed be glad to have you accompany us."

"Then I'll have to hustle back to the yacht and acquaint Ethel with the news," said Mr. Ellis.

He left them, promising to rejoin them within the hour.

In the meantime the others continued their way to the spot where they had left the aeroplane, and the

two young aeroplane scouts looked it over carefully.

"All O. K.," said Billy, "and plenty of gas to carry us across the continent. This will be a pleasure trip."

"Unless I should happen to turn Turk again," declared Yusef.

"If you do I'll crack you over the noodle with my revolver," said Sergeant Scott grimly. "As a Turk you're a disappointment. You're a bad actor when you get started."

"I won't blame you for anything you may do to me when I'm in that condition," replied Yusef.

"Well, if we had done what we should have on one or two occasions you would never have been Turk or English ever again," declared Billy.

"Was I as bad as all that?"

"You were very bad. Why, you even marooned us on top of the Sphinx, and it was hot up there!"

Billy looked aggrieved.

"I'll promise not to do it again," replied Yusef with a smile.

"I don't intend to give you the chance," said Billy, also smiling.

As he had promised, Mr. Ellis rejoined them within the hour, and with him was his daughter. She expressed delight at seeing Henri again, and introductions to the others followed.

Sergeant Scott knocked the ashes from his pipe upon the side of the aeroplane.

"What's the use of sitting here all day?" he growled. "I want to get back to Cairo, where I belong."

"Haven't you had a good time on this trip, sergeant?" demanded Billy.

"Oh, yes, I suppose so. But I don't care much about these airships, and the sooner I get back the sooner I'll know I'll be safe to go out and fight the Turks."

"Have you ever been aloft, Miss Ellis?" asked Henri.

"Never," was the smiling reply.

"And you aren't afraid or nervous?"

"With such daring aviators to handle the craft, why should I be?" asked the girl.

Henri blushed, as did Billy, who had heard this remark.

"You see, I know your reputations," laughed the girl.

"Are we going to stay here forever?" demanded the anxious sergeant. "'Cause if we are, I'll light up again," and he produced his pipe.

"We are going immediately, sergeant," Billy hastened to say, after a quick glance at the pipe. "Anything to avoid the odor of that thing."

Sergeant Scott eyed him wrathfully.

"Now don't you go calling my pipe hard names,"

he exclaimed. "He's the best friend I've got when I'm all alone."

"Let him rest till you're alone then." Billy turned to the others. "All ready, folks? We're about to fly."

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE LAST TRANSFORMATION.

Arrived in Cairo the entire party repaired at once to the quarters of General Brush, where Billy and Henri reported the success of their mission.

In spite of the plea of the two lads, and also of Mr. Ellis, General Brush ordered Yusef confined in the guard house.

"What you tell me may be true," he said to the lads, "but I do not intend to take chances. You know what happened before. There will be no repetition. However, I shall look into the matter."

Mr. Ellis and his daughter, therefore, went to hunt up quarters for their stay in the African metropolis, while Henri and Billy wended their way to the abode of Sergeant Scott.

That worthy was greatly surprised to hear that Yusef had been placed under guard.

"Pretty tough," he said between puffs of his big pipe. "That fellow has had a pretty hard time. He must have been through a whole lot. I'd like to know his story."

"Perhaps we shall some day," replied Billy.

And as it turned out they were to hear it much sooner than they expected.

Leaving Sergeant Scott, Billy and Henri sought Captain Richardson, for they felt sure that Yusef was really his brother. The captain expressed a keen desire to see Yusef once more, and General Brush granted the three permission to speak to him.

Yusef was pacing up and down his little room when the three were admitted to his presence. He gave the boys a smile of welcome, and then bent a steady gaze of recognition upon the British officer.

Once more the latter advanced and held out his hand.

"Charley!" he exclaimed. "Don't you know me —your brother Ralph?"

Slowly the light of comprehension dawned in Yusef's face.

"Ralph! Is it indeed you?" he exclaimed.

He took a step forward, and made a movement as though to take the other's hand. Then he dropped his arm and paused. He turned his head away.

Captain Richardson's face flushed, and his arm also fell to his side.

"I had forgotten," he said slowly.

He turned quickly on his heel and would have left the tent, had not Yusef called to him to stop. Standing a few paces apart, the brothers faced each other.

"There is some reason why I cannot bring myself to take your hand," said Yusef quietly. "What it is I do not know. What I do know is that there is

a barrier between us. I have been so long out of my mind that I cannot remember. But, no matter what it is, you must tell me."

"There was an unjust accusation brought against me," replied Captain Richardson calmly, "and you believed it. But I now have proof of my innocence —have had it for years. When I have the proof with me I shall tell you and not before."

He turned on his heel and left the tent.

Yusef struck his forehead with his fist.

"Why can't I remember?" he asked fiercely. "Why can't I place this strange patchwork together? Occasionally I get glimpses of the figure of a dark-skinned man of immense power, a chief, or a king, or something, and when I do I am convinced that he is in some way responsible for my condition. Tsha! That's the name! Tsha! That's it! Have you ever heard the name? I can't remember any more."

Yusef sank down upon the floor and buried his face in his hands.

Billy and Henri gazed at each other with wide-open eyes.

"Isn't that the Ameer whom we captured in Algiers?" asked the latter excitedly.

"I am sure that is the name," cried Billy. "Yes, I know it is. So he is mixed up in this, eh?"

"Was," replied Henri; "I guess he is a good native now."

"Good? What do you mean, good?"

"Dead!"

"By George! I had forgotten. He was to be put to death this morning. That would be terrible. He seems to be one of the missing links in this chain. If he only were alive we might learn something."

"There is always the chance that something has gone wrong," said Henri. "We must take it."

"You mean return to Algiers?"

"Exactly; and bring the Ameer here if he still lives."

"Let's be on the wing then. I suppose it is a useless journey, but we may be rewarded. You look over the plane while I have a few words with Captain Richardson and General Brush."

Henri asked no questions, and departed to do as Billy suggested. The latter at once sought out Captain Richardson.

"This proof of which you speak," he said, "how soon can you have it here?"

"A day," was the reply, "or two at the most. It is with some of my things at Port Said."

"Can you dispatch a messenger for it at once?"

"Yes, but——"

"Do so then. I leave for Algiers immediately. There is a man there, if he has not been shot, who in some way is connected with your brother's past. With him we may be able to clear up this mystery and make sure that your brother's mind is restored."

"I shall send for the proofs at once."

"And may I trust you not to show them to him until I return?"

"Why?"

"Because," Billy explained, "if we can produce all the details of his past life together, it may clear up his mental vision permanently."

"Then I shall do as you say. Hunt me up immediately upon your return."

Billy next made his way to the headquarters of General Brush, where he implored the general not to act in Yusef's case until he returned. After some reluctance the request was granted.

An hour later the lads were in the air, making for the distant Algerian capital at full speed.

It was early the next morning when they arrived and went at once to General Broussard.

"Has Ameer Tsha been executed yet?" asked Billy anxiously.

"No," was the reply, "the execution was stayed until tomorrow upon representations made to me by other chiefs of the tribes. They have offered to lay down their arms if his life is spared, and I told them I would consider the matter. But why do you ask?"

Rapidly Billy explained.

"Now, general," he added, "isn't there some way you can fix it so we can take the Ameer to Cairo with us? We will guarantee to return him unharmed within three days."

General Broussard considered this matter for some time.

"If the tribesmen were to learn he had been spirited away, there is no telling what would happen," he said. "However, I suppose that could be kept under cover."

"Yes, sir," agreed both lads eagerly.

"Well, you have rendered me valuable service. It shall be as you say."

Billy and Henri seized each other in a warm embrace, and executed a jig of joy right there in the general's quarters. The latter was forced to smile at their happiness.

"He shall be put in your custody at once," said the general, "and I make only two stipulations."

"And those, sir?" asked Billy.

"The first is that two of my own officers shall accompany you, never losing sight of the prisoner. The second that the Ameer be returned safely to me within three days."

"We agree, sir," said Henri quietly.

"Very well then. Will you start at once?"

"With your permission, sir."

General Broussard summoned an orderly and ordered that the prisoner be brought before him.

"Ameer," said General Broussard, when the native chieftain stood before him, "your presence is required in Cairo temporarily. These lads will take you there by aeroplane immediately."

The Ameer inclined his head a trifle, but said no word.

General Broussard summoned two members of his staff, to whom he confided the nature of their errand.

"Under no circumstances," he said, "let this man out of your sight for a single moment."

The officers signified that they understood, and Billy and Henri, thanking the general and bidding him good-by, led the way to the place where they had left their aeroplane. Ameer Tsha walked behind them and the two Frenchmen brought up the rear.

As soon as all were in their places the machine was immediately headed back toward Cairo at the best speed Billy could give her.

"I hope we shall be able to clear up the situation," declared Henri anxiously. "Yusef seems to be a pretty decent sort. What is your idea, exactly?"

"Well," said Billy, "I thought I would get Captain Richardson, Mr. Ellis and the Ameer together, and then confront Yusef with all of them. If that doesn't shake his memory up I don't know what will. In some manner or other they are all connected with his past life, and we may be able to scare his memory back where it will remain permanently."

"Not a bad idea, at that," decided Henri.

"I flatter myself I have heard of worse," agreed

Billy. "We will also have General Brush and Sergeant Scott present at the conference. The general naturally will insist on being there, and Sergeant Scott may help us out a bit. He's pretty shrewd, in his way."

"Rather," agreed Henri dryly. "And when is this remarkable stunt to be pulled off?"

"First thing in the morning, if possible."

"Well, I hope it works."

"No more than I do. I have taken quite a fancy to old Yusef, Turk though he was. Besides, I have an unholy longing to hear his story."

"I'll bet something pretty it's a strange one."

Billy nodded his agreement.

And the boys were right. It was indeed a remarkable story they brought out the following day.

CHAPTER XXX.

BRINGING THE LIGHT TO YUSEF.

"As long as this is my idea, I propose to work it out in my own way," declared Billy. "I'm the ringmaster, and when I crack my whip, it's up to the rest of you to stand around."

Billy, Henri, Captain Richardson and Mr. Ellis were gathered in the sergeant's tent. General Brush had not yet arrived, and they were waiting for him in order to begin the test that all hoped would bring the light to Yusef.

General Brush put in his appearance half an hour later. He readily agreed to leave the management of the affair in Billy's hands.

"I am sure you will go through with it successfully," he said.

"Thank you, general. The Ameer is in charge of the two French officers in the rear of the tent. My idea is first to face Yusef with one leaf of his past at a time. After that, if it is necessary, we shall have them all in together. Will you please stand over there, general?"

He motioned to the far side of the tent.

"Henri, you and Sergeant Scott also get back there."

The other two obeyed without question.

"Captain Richardson and you, Mr. Ellis, will please leave the tent and remain out until I call you."

The two men nodded and went out. Billy turned to General Brush.

"Now, general, if you will give Sergeant Scott an order to bring Yusef from the guardhouse, we'll ring up the curtain on this show."

The general rapidly scrawled an order, passed it to the sergeant, and the latter made his way out.

"If you please, I shall do the talking," said Billy.

General Brush and Henri nodded their agreement.

Fifteen minutes later Sergeant Scott reappeared in the tent, escorting Yusef. Then the sergeant took his place at Henri's side.

Billy advanced close to Yusef.

"Yusef," he began, "or I should say Mr. Richardson, in spite of your evident associations with the Turks and the undoubted fact that you have worked hand in hand with them against England and France, General Brush here has interested himself in your case, and has decided to give you a hearing. Am I right, general?"

"You are," replied General Brush.

"Now, Richardson," continued Billy, "we should be glad to hear your story."

"I hardly know what to say," was the reply. "I

cannot remember my associations with the Turks, though I know they must be true, from all you have said. Therefore I shall not deny them. But I can throw no light on the matter."

"But," said Billy, "would you welcome an effort to make you see the light?"

Yusef nodded eagerly.

"Indeed I would," he replied.

There was no doubting the man's earnestness.

"Then we shall proceed," said Billy quietly.

He advanced to the entrance of the tent.

"Captain Richardson!" he called.

The captain entered. Billy turned to Yusef.

"You know this man?" he asked.

"He is my brother," replied Captain Richardson.

"Do you admit he is your brother?" asked Billy of Yusef.

"There can be no doubt of it," replied Yusef. "Yes, he is my brother, Ralph. It was because of him that I left England. I remember that."

"And you do not remember why?"

Yusef shook his head. "No."

"Captain Richardson, will you explain?" asked Billy.

The captain cleared his throat somewhat huskily, and began his story.

"I am what is known as a 'younger son,'" he said. "Charley is five years my senior. The trouble came about at home. I had been traveling with a

set of companions far richer than we were. I was in debt. Charley, being somewhat older than I, had an income of his own.

"Well, one day a check bearing his endorsement and made out to me was brought to him for payment. It was a forgery, as he knew at first glance. Charley's natural supposition was that I, being hard pressed financially, had forged his name. He paid the amount, and then sent for me.

"I told him I was innocent, but he did not believe me. To cut a long story short, we had words, and he told me that were it not for my mother, who was even then on the point of death, he would send me to prison. We both thought that that settled the matter, but it didn't.

"Besides my brother's endorsement of the check, it contained also another name, the name of a man who had been an enemy of Charley's. In some manner this other man got wind of it, and he called in the authorities. Protests of innocence by Charley availed nothing, and they announced their intention of bringing him to trial. Of course Charley could have cleared himself by bringing me in, but this he did not do. He knocked down the officers and escaped. That was the last we saw of him. A year later my bosom companion died, and left a written confession that he was the man who had forged the check."

Captain Richardson drew a piece of paper from

his pocket and gave it to Yusef, who took it eagerly. Quickly he scanned the brief document, and then he rushed upon his brother and clasped him in a tight embrace.

"Oh, Ralph, Ralph! what an injustice I did you," he exclaimed.

"Not as much as you did yourself," replied Captain Richardson.

"Do you remember all this clearly?" asked Billy of Yusef.

"Yes, yes," replied the other, "and I remember more. I remember how I left England in great wrath, and sailed for America. There I went west, to Colorado, where I settled in a small town. That was shortly before the outbreak of the Spanish-American war. When war was declared I was elected lieutenant of a volunteer company, and we were soon embarked for Cuba.

"There I was taken with a fever, and a man named Ellis, who had been my particular chum in Colorado, nursed me through it. By Jove! he is the same man I met the other day. I remember going back to Colorado, but after that I do not recall anything."

"We'll try and refresh your memory a bit," said Billy.

He stepped to the entrance of the tent and called Mr. Ellis. The latter came in.

"Explain how your friend Richardson disappeared from his Colorado home," said Billy.

"Why," began Mr. Ellis, "Charley learned that inquiries were being made about him, and I gathered that he had had some trouble at home in England. He didn't take me into his confidence in this matter, although we had been almost like brothers. He was living with me. When I went to call him one morning he was gone. He had disappeared in the night. I never saw him again till in Algiers the other day."

"I remember! I remember!" interrupted Yusef. "I was afraid detectives had trailed me and would take me back home. I left the house in the night, and went to New York. From there I went to Paris, and from Paris I came to Africa, finally landing in Algiers. Even there I learned inquiries were being made for me. Evidently it was Ralph who was searching for me."

Captain Richardson nodded his assent.

"I never gave up hope," he said.

"I feared detectives were still on my trail," continued Yusef, "so I took to the hills and the desert, and then—and then—I forget."

He stopped speaking, and gazed about somewhat wildly.

"I'll try and refresh your memory again," said Billy quietly.

He stepped outside the tent, and went around to the back. He returned a few moments later fol-

lowed by the two French officers, who dragged a third man between them.

"Do you recognize this man?" asked the lad of Yusef.

The French officers swung the Ameer of the desert around so that he faced Yusef.

And then a strange thing happened.

With a wild cry Yusef sprang suddenly forward, and as he leaped through the air in the direction of the Ameer that same peculiar look which the boys had so often seen again passed over his face.

Yusef had leaped forward so suddenly that the others in the tent were taken by surprise, and before they could move to interfere, Yusef's powerful fingers had sunk in the Ameer's throat, while he bore him to the floor.

As he shook him like an angry dog, strange words came from his lips.

"Quick!" cried Billy, leaping forward. "Pull him off! He's a wild-eyed Turk again."

It required the combined strength of all the others to drag Yusef from his victim, but when he had regained his feet Billy knew that he was still the Englishman. In spite of the severe shock he had suffered, his Turkish personality had enveloped him but a few moments.

The French officers lifted the trembling Ameer to his feet, and as Yusef faced him with blazing eyes

and clenched fists, the tribesman shrank back with cries of terror.

Billy faced Yusef sternly.

"Steady now, old man," he said quietly. "Tell us what it is all about. You remember now."

Billy's last words were not a question. They were a plain statement of fact.

"Yes," replied Yusef in a harsh voice. "I remember. For nine years after I wandered into the hills I was a member of one of the tribes. This man," pointing an accusing finger at the trembling Ameer, "was a member of the same tribe."

Yusef paused for a moment to gain a breath, then continued:

"For nine years Tsha and I were friends. We were almost inseparable companions. I had made up my mind to spend the rest of my days with the tribe. Then the old Ameer died and Tsha took his place; and still we were friends, or seemed to be.

"One day, it has been perhaps seven years ago, I fell in love with a woman of the tribe and a short time later I married her. A year later we had a son. From the day of my marriage the Ameer's friendship for me underwent a change. At first I didn't know why. Then I learned. It was because he would have married my wife.

"Returning from Algiers one day, six months after my son was born, I found the dead body of my wife in my tent. She had been stabbed. I went

mad, I guess. I accused the Ameer of the crime, and he admitted it. I drew a revolver and would have shot him then and there, but I was overpowered by some of his men and driven from the camp. Why the Ameer didn't have me killed then, I don't know.

"When I left I took my little son with me. I wandered about for days, and at length came upon a cave near the frontier of Tripoli. There I have made my home since.

"From the first, however, I lived but to avenge myself upon the Ameer. Year after year I worked with this end in view, but it seemed my chance would never come.

"With the drawing of Turkey into this great war, however, I saw my chance. I made a deal with the Turks. I would bring about an uprising of the tribesmen if, in turn, I was given the person of the Ameer to do with as I pleased.

"That's about all there is to the story, except that from the day when I found the dead body of my wife, until a few days ago, I have believed that I was an Algerian, or perhaps a Turk, I don't know which, now."

General Brush stepped forward when Yusef had concluded his story. He extended a hand, which Yusef grasped warmly.

"You have indeed been through a terrible ordeal," said the general kindly, "and I promise you

now and here that whatever charges have been made against you shall be dropped."

"Thank you, general," was the reply, "and I hope that I shall be allowed the pleasure of offering my services to the British army."

"You shall," was the reply, "and I promise they shall be accepted."

Mr. Ellis now stepped forward.

"Charley, old man," he said, "I want to say that I am glad to see you again and to know that your difficulties have been cleared up."

They shook hands warmly, and then Yusef, for so we shall call him to the end, turned to his brother. He walked across the tent and extended his hand.

"Ralph," he said, somewhat brokenly, "once before I refused to shake hands with you. Will you take mine now?"

"Of course, Charley," was the reply.

Their hands met in a long and affectionate clasp.

Now Henri stepped forward and spoke to Yusef.

"You don't know how glad I am to know your troubles are over at last," he said.

"Thanks," replied Yusef, laughing happily.

"Old top," said Billy, also advancing, "you have sat in some pretty stiff games at one time or another. I'm tickled to death that you've won out at last."

Yusef extended a hand to each of the boys, and they grasped them heartily.

"Wherever I am," he said simply, "and whenever

I think of you two lads, which shall be often, it will always be with heartfelt gratitude and a great desire to repay you in some way for bringing the light to Yusef."

"Why," said Billy quietly, "we couldn't have done less. Still, if you want to repay me," and he grinned broadly, "I still remember that I have a crow to pick with you."

He paused a moment ere he continued.

"Yes, you might hoist yourself to the top of the Sphinx and spend an afternoon. You marooned me there once, and I tell you it was hot!"

THE END.